



PARENT HANDBOOK



MEMORIAL DRIVE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11612 MEMORIAL DRIVE
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024

713-784-0820 (Direct)
713-780-3914 (Fax)

LICENSED BY TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

The Yellow School at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church is an extension of the Christian Education ministry of the church. The early years of life are the most important for laying the foundations of faith and for social, emotional, and cognitive development. Knowing this, The Yellow School provides each child with acceptance, respect, and love in a Christian environment by caring adults; it offers a place where they can learn about their uniqueness as children of God, develop new relationships, and learn about their expanding world; it fosters an environment in which they are free to explore, experiment, make decisions, and learn to problem solve; and it provides curricula that teaches the skills needed for future school success (literacy, language, math, science, and social studies).

Within this framework, a child develops a positive self-image, a sense of self-worth, and the ability to self-regulate as we provide them with many opportunities for successful accomplishments. We encourage curiosity and independence. We believe the love of God binds us together. In that love, we welcome and respect all faiths and provide a welcoming and loving community in which children learn to work and play with others; to respect property and the rights of others; and to learn of God's love for us all.

We believe each child is unique and must be allowed to grow and develop at his/her own pace. We plan a balance of child-directed and teacher-directed activities designed to encourage physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual growth. Our staff members serve as positive role models and provide an environment in which each child develops a good self-image and sense of self-worth.

STATE LICENSING

The Yellow School at MDPC is licensed by the State of Texas' Department of Protective and Regulatory Services to provide care for 85 children daily who are 3 years through kindergarten. As a licensed facility, we operate using the Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers as a basic guideline for setting policy and procedures. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available through the school office and online at www.dfps.state.tx.us. Parents are welcome to review the State Minimum standards, and the center's most recent Licensing inspection report at any time. The report is posted in the front office of The Yellow School at MDPC, and the Standards can be obtained by asking the office staff.

The address of the local Licensing office is 1330 E. 40th Houston, Texas 77022 and the phone number of our licensing representative is 713-940-5283. The child abuse

hotline is 1-800-252-5400. You may also report suspected abuse or neglect at www.txabusehotline.org.

ELIGIBILITY AND ADMISSION

The Yellow School is open to children in the church and community without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, or ancestry.

The Yellow School only accepts online applications. Families with children **currently enrolled** at the Yellow School will apply for all their eligible children online in late January or early February (dates will be announced) for the following school year. **All priorities end three days after registration.** After that time, applications will still be accepted, but on a first come, first served basis.

Class placement will be made in the order in which the applications were received. **Currently enrolled children and their siblings will be placed in classes in the following order:**

- ❖ Children of MDPC members, Yellow School staff and Little School staff
- ❖ Children of non-MDPC members

Families who **do not currently** have a child at Yellow School may apply online for the following school year during the fall. Once placement for currently enrolled children and their siblings has been completed, class placement for new families will be made, in the order in which they were received, in the following order of priority:

- ❖ Children of MDPC members
- ❖ Children enrolled at Little School
- ❖ Children who have had siblings at the school, but not currently
- ❖ Children whose parents attended the Yellow School
- ❖ Children who are new to the Yellow School

When placement is completed, and classes are filled, remaining applications are placed on a waiting list in the same priority as listed above. Families will be notified if a space becomes available.

Admission and class placement are at the sole and absolute discretion of the Director, applying the policies approved by the Yellow School Parent Advisory Committee.

KINDERGARTEN - Prospective kindergarten children who have not previously attended Yellow School must schedule a morning visit to kindergarten before placement is made.

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

A child with special needs will be evaluated by the parents, consultants, and staff to see if The Yellow School can be beneficial to him/her. The Director will recommend to the Director of Early Childhood Programs action to be taken on each request for the enrollment of a special needs child, if necessary. We will make any modifications necessary for each child with special needs who is enrolled in the school.

CLASSES OFFERED

Carline begins at 8:45 and will go until 9:05. Students will be considered late after 9:05 and must sign in at the front desk.

CLASSES FOR 3-YEAR-OLDS – children must be 3 by September 1st and toilet trained.

- 5 Day – Monday through Friday
- 3 Day – Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- 2 Day – Tuesday and Thursday

PRE-K CLASSES – children must be 4 by September 1st.

- 4 Day – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
- 5 Day – Monday through Friday

KINDERGARTEN – children must be 5 by September 1st.

- 5 Day – Monday through Friday

EXTENDED DAY (3:30 and 4:00 option)

For an additional fee, extended days are offered from 2:45 to 3:30 or 4:00 after the regular school day for those children that require extra care at the end of the day.

***Afternoon carline is from 2:25 – 2:45.**

STAFF

To accomplish the stated purpose of the school, the teachers at the Yellow School have been carefully chosen based on their educational background and experience, their personalities and for the warmth, love and concern they exhibit towards children. Staff members are well educated in child development, have an understanding and appreciation of young children and value, respect, and care for them as unique individuals.

All Yellow School lead teachers have a least a bachelor's degree as do many of our assistants, and all staff members are fully qualified. All our staff participates in a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education each year (30 for the director), which includes attending workshops, lab schools, seminars, staff meetings and reading professional publications.

FEE POLICIES

The Yellow School is a non-profit program and tuition and fees charged are based on actual operating costs of the school. Amounts are set each year by the Finance Committee and agreed upon by The Yellow School Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and approved by the session of the church.

The online application form must be completed each year for each child to be enrolled in the school. A registration fee is paid at the time of registration. No refunds will be issued once a place has been offered. **Any eligible refunds must be requested by email and approved by the finance committee.**

Prior to starting school, the following fees must be paid in full:

- MAY PREPAID for the school year you are applying. Equaling one month's tuition. This **non-refundable** fee becomes the tuition payment for May and is due upon the child's acceptance into the program.
- A PROGRAM FEE for all children is also due upon acceptance. This fee is **non-refundable**. This pays for supplies, field trips, and school T-shirt.

SUMMER SESSION

An online application form must be completed each year for each **NEW** child to be enrolled in our SUMMER SESSION. A **non-refundable** registration fee is due from anyone not enrolled in the incoming Fall session. Tuition for the summer session is due on the 1st of the month by QuickBooks. Summer school fees and tuition are **non-refundable**.

An optional EXTENDED DAY program is offered to children in all classes. Parents wishing to enroll their children in EXTENDED DAY may do so on an as needed basis. You will be billed only for what you use by QuickBooks the following month.

NOTE: ONCE YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN ACCEPTED FOR THE REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR, THE FOLLOWING FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE:

- All Registration Fees
- May Prepaid Tuition
- Program Fee

Tuition payments must be made on a monthly basis and are due in 8 equal installments, September through April, without regard to the number of school days in a month or the number of days your child may be absent. May tuition is prepaid as a reservation fee for your child; therefore, no May tuition is due. Tuition payments are due the first day of each month (or day after a holiday or weekend) by QuickBooks only. **Any tuition payment made after the 10th of the month will be considered late and a \$30.00 late fee will be added for every month not paid thereafter.** Please speak with the Director regarding any special payment needs. A **6%** discount is available for families who have 2 or more children in the Yellow School. If you have a child in the Yellow School and another in The Little School, you may take a **3%** discount in each program. **Discounts do not apply to extended day, registration, May Prepaid Tuition and/or testing/supply fees.** No more than a 6% discount may be taken per family. **You are responsible for letting the school know of your eligibility for a discount. No refunds can be given for discounts not requested at the beginning of the school year.**

No make-up days, credit and/or refunds will be given for absences, vacations, illness, weather, emergency closings, or anything outside of the school or church's control.

QUICKBOOKS

All fees will be paid by QuickBooks. Please alert the office if you have an error in payments, late payments due to error will still receive a late charge unless you have communicated with the office the issue.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Some funds are available for families needing financial assistance. MDPC asks that these funds be reserved for families with an annual income of \$50,000 or less unless special circumstances apply. Tax records will be requested. Please contact the director of the Yellow School for more information.

REQUIRED ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

The required forms which must be completed may be found on our webpage (www.ys.mdpc.org) for your convenience. All the forms may be completed online and sent back to us electronically. Electronic signatures are accepted. Included are immunization and health information, a confidential information form about your child, emergency information and volunteer forms.

During the school year, should any of your personal information change, please let us know immediately.

ORIENTATION

Prior to the beginning of the school year, there will be a Parent Orientation and Meet the Teacher opportunity. These events allow the families to meet the teachers and other families in the classroom. Once you accept your placement on the roster with payment, an email will be sent with these dates.

SCHOOL YEAR – CALENDAR

Please see the school calendar for specific information and dates. With a few exceptions (mostly beginning and ending dates), we will follow the school calendar of Spring Branch ISD.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The teachers will call, text, and/or email you to notify you of school closings due to severe weather (i.e., hurricane, tornado, high winds, flooding, etc.) or a school emergency (i.e., no electricity, severe plumbing problems, etc.) **We will cancel school if Spring Branch ISD cancels its classes. No refunds are given for school closings.**

CAR LINE

The Yellow School does not provide transportation. You will receive a copy of your class lists as soon as we have complete information from all our families – usually the first week of school.

- Classes begin at 9:00 am and doors open at 8:45. It is important that the children be in their class to participate in the opening group time. It is very difficult for some children to come in comfortably after class has started. Being on time is one of the essential components of teaching children that school is important.
- **CAR LINE:** Please pull your car up to the Yellow School sign AND REMAIN IN YOUR CAR. The teachers will greet the children, and escort them into the school. **FOR SAFETY, CHILDREN MUST EXIT THE CAR ON THE PASSENGER SIDE OF THE CAR.** If this is not possible for you, please park and walk your child to the school.
- If you cannot wait in the car line, please park your car away from the line of traffic and bring your child in. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR OR OTHER CHILDREN UNATTENDED IN THE CAR LINE.**
- If you bring your child into the school, please make sure that a teacher greets them before you leave. Be careful walking across the parking lot. We are concerned about the safety of children and adults.

- To keep the car line moving, please pull **away from the line** to fasten seat belts. Also, remember that the line is **not** a good place to have lengthy talks with the teachers. If you'd like to talk with a teacher, please call her or the school to arrange a conference.
- **If you bring your child in late or pick them up early, you must come in the main entrance and sign in or out.**
- **If you walk your child to their classroom and class has begun, please be very quiet so that the class is not interrupted. It is best if you allow one of the staff members to take your child to their classroom.**

Only parents or other authorized persons may pick up a child. In accordance with state law, if someone other than the child's parent is picking up a child, that person may be asked to show proper identification. Also, when another person is to pick up a child, the school ***must be notified, in advance, in writing. If you must call to let us know someone else will be picking up your child, please email us so that we have the information in writing. No child may be picked up by anyone under the age of 18.***

For your protection, if a parent calls to authorize the emergency release of a child, we will verify that the caller is truly the parent by asking you to send an email allowing the specified person to pick up. We are legally unable to refuse visitation, or the privilege of picking up a child, to a parent UNLESS WE HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF CUSTODY from the legal parent or guardian who has physical custody. **It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to furnish any necessary documents including a current certified copy of the court divorce decree.** The document(s) must be specific as to who has legal custody, visitation rights, care for the child(ren) during holidays and any information as to specific arrangements made for payment of tuition and fees.

CELL PHONE FREE ZONE

When in the car line or when walking your child in or out of school, please **DO NOT** talk or text on your cell phone. Your child needs and deserves your full attention as you are saying "hello" and "goodbye". When you are in your car, talking/texting on a cell phone becomes a safety issue. **Therefore, for the physical and emotional health of all, just as in city school zones, the Yellow School is a CELL PHONE FREE ZONE.** Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

An online form listing medical information, insurance information, emergency information and a permission statement must be completed, and returned to school **BEFORE** school begins. The **EMERGENCY INFORMATION/PERMISSION FORM** portion must be completed by you and signed. **During the school year, please inform**

the school office if any changes occur in the information on these forms (telephone numbers, addresses, immunizations, etc.).

The medical report must be in our files prior to your child's first day of school. Effective September 2016, all children enrolled in The Yellow School must have all immunizations required by the Texas Department of State Health Services unless for reasons of conscience. Should you have any concerns or questions about this policy, please contact the Director.

If a child becomes ill or is injured in such a way that he/she needs medical attention, staff at the Yellow School will

1. assess the nature of the illness or injury and care for the child apart from the other children.
2. attempt to contact the child's parents (unless otherwise instructed). If neither parent is available, we will contact an authorized alternate. Therefore, when choosing persons to be contacted in case of emergency, please be sure they are local people who will most likely be available.
3. contact the child's physician, if requested and if necessary.
4. administer first-aid and CPR when needed. Our teachers are all certified in CPR and First Aid.

If we are unable to contact parents immediately and feel we must take a child to an emergency room for a minor emergency, someone from the school staff will take him/her to the nearest Emergency Center. Parents will be notified as soon as possible and asked to meet us there. The child's parents will be responsible for any charges incurred.

In an emergency that will need a call to 911, the child's parents will be notified immediately and asked to meet the staff member at the Emergency Room. Again, parents will be responsible for any charges incurred.

ILLNESS

The health and well-being of your child is important to us. Please keep your child home if there is any evidence of illness such as:

- fever (100.4 or higher), without medication
- persistent cough and/or sore throat
- heavy non-clear nasal discharge
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- skin rash
- symptoms of a possible communicable disease including conjunctivitis.

We do not dispense medication. Please do not put medication in the children's bag as a matter of safety.

No child may return to school for **at least 24 hours after his/her temperature has returned to normal without medication and/or after vomiting and/or diarrhea has ceased.**

Please report any communicable diseases to the school, so that we may inform other families.

Please notify the school if your child will be absent or late.

RECOMMENDED VACCINES FOR STAFF

- Flu vaccine every fall.
- Td/Tdap – once every 10 years

Recommended for teachers over 60

- Pneumococcal vaccine
- Shingles – Zoster

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The Yellow School has developed an emergency plan in coordination with MDPC. This plan is designed to protect the children should a disaster of any kind occur. A copy of that detailed plan is kept in the office and available upon request.

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

The Yellow School does not require a uniform. Children should be dressed in washable play clothes. Although we provide aprons for potentially messy activities, when children are enjoying paint, glue, etc. their clothing may become soiled. Party or dressy clothes are not appropriate (unless for special event or picture day). **Closed-toe shoes** with rubber soles are **required** for the playground. “Jellies”, sandals, “cros”, cowboy boots and slick leather soles are potentially dangerous when running and climbing. Please know that our playground is covered by mulch and we want to keep the children’s feet protected.

Drawstrings on jackets are a choking hazard. They can get caught on climbing equipment, etc. Please remove them. Children may not wear necklaces for they too, can get caught on furniture and equipment and are potentially dangerous to your child.

Unless the weather is very rainy, we will have time outdoors each day. Please send appropriate clothing, remembering that the playground can be quite chilly early in the morning. **Please mark ALL clothing with your child’s name.**

Since all children enrolled should be toilet trained and since we do not have diaper changing areas as required by licensing (necessary only for those programs which serve infants and toddlers), please do NOT send your child to school in diapers or “pull-ups”. We are happy to change clothes in case of accidents.

Many parents are concerned about their children (especially three-year old's) having potty accidents. This is common, and the teachers will help the child when this happens. Again, please DO NOT send your child to school in pull-ups. This sends the message to the child that it is OK not to use the potty. We are happy to work with you on potty training issues, but we can only be successful in this if you are consistent about putting “grown-up” underwear on your child.

All children should have an extra change of clothing in their school bags. We do keep some extra clothing on hand in case of accidents. If your child arrives home in school clothing, please wash it, and return it as soon as possible.

Each child will be given a school t-shirt at parent orientation or meet the teacher in August every year. All pre-k and kindergarten children **must** wear school shirts on field trips. (The 3-year-old classes do not take field trips).

PLEASE DO NOT SEND HAND SANITIZER TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD.

BACKPACKS

All children must bring a **backpack** to school each day. The bag should be roomy enough to hold the child's belongings (work done at school, items they might have brought from home, lunch boxes, etc.) The bag also is used as a “traveling bulletin board”. We will attach a smaller bag to the outside of your child's bag. This small bag must be kept on the child's bag always and is to be used by you to send us notes, and information. This enables the teachers to easily see that you have sent something to us. The small bag will also be used by us to send you notes, newsletters, lesson plans and other items that are important for you to read. **PLEASE DO NOT USE BAGS WITH WHEELS.** They damage the cubbies. **A large backpack with a large opening is the best choice.**

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

THE YELLOW SCHOOL IS A PEANUT AND TREENUT FREE FACILITY

Everyone should pack a well-balanced lunch for their child with water. According to the *Minimum Standards and Guidelines*, the following amounts constitute one serving for a growing child, ages 2 to 6:

- 4 oz. of milk, 1/2 oz. of cheese, or 4 oz. of yogurt (need 4 servings per day)
- ½ to 1 oz. of cooked lean meat, fish, or poultry or ½ to 1 egg or ¼ c. cooked beans (need 3 servings per day)
- 2 to 3 tablespoons of cooked or ½ cup raw, leafy vegetables
- 2 to 3 tablespoons of canned fruit, 1/8 cup of dried fruit, 1 small piece of fresh fruit, or ¼ cup juice (need 4 + servings of veggies and fruit per day)
- ½ slice of bread or ¼ cup cooked cereal, ¼ cup rice or noodles or 1 or 2 crackers (need 4 servings per day)

Sending a combination of the foods listed above will meet your child's nutritional needs for one meal.

Read labels when purchasing prepared foods. Many **Lunchables** are very high in fat, sodium and calories and children often throw most of them away. **Fruit Rollups and fruit snacks** are **not** fruit, please do not send these.

Please do not send peanut butter or Nutella, items made with peanut butter, and/or any foods that contain peanuts (trail mix, etc.) Foods that do not contain peanuts but are manufactured in a facility that handles peanuts are not allowed, unless otherwise notified. The Yellow School is a peanut and tree nut FREE facility, and these items are not permitted in the building.

Please send food that the children can open themselves, or with a minimum of assistance. We try to teach the children to be self-sufficient, but some packaging is quite difficult to manage.

Your child expends a lot of energy while at school; please include healthy foods in her/his lunch box. **Please do not send candy.** Since we are unable to provide refrigeration for the children's lunches, please put an ice pack in your child's lunch box to keep perishable foods cold per the requirement of state licensing.

REST MATS

Children in the three-year-old classes and Pre-K have a rest period, per state licensing, before going out to play after lunch. A resting mat or child-size sleeping bag is required for each child with their name clearly showing. Mats will be sent home each week to be washed.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Teachers support children's social and emotional development, assisting them to be comfortable, happy, and involved in play and other activities. The staff helps children deal with anger and frustration by comforting them, encouraging them to identify and

verbalize the problem, helping them find words when necessary and helping them use various strategies to problem solve.

By setting clear, consistent, and reasonable limits, the children gain a sense of security; they know what is expected. Within these limits, children are encouraged to make choices and decisions. Mistakes become learning opportunities and the child's sense of self-esteem grows as he/she experiences success in a variety of situations.

Yellow School teachers try to plan to avoid conflicts and redirect unacceptable behavior. They model, reinforce, and nurture positive actions.

Occasionally, a child will lose control of his/her actions and emotions and removal from the group becomes necessary for that child to regain control and to safeguard the feelings and security of the other children. This is not a punishment; rather it is an opportunity for the child for the child to calm down and to plan, with the teacher, what he/she would like to do upon rejoining the group. Separation from the group does not exceed one minute per year of child's age.

BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

Sometimes a child exhibits behavior which are of concern to others. Usually these behaviors (such as biting) are infrequent and result from frustration, especially in children whose language skills are not sufficient for good communication. Whenever a staff member observes a changing pattern in the child's behavior, the parents are contacted and, together, they try to find reasons for the behavior and solutions to it.

However, should these behavior problems become frequent and/or severe, further steps may have to be taken, such as outside intervention with a professional who may offer additional recommendations to the school and the family. ***The school reserves the right to and will request that a family withdraw their child if it is determined that the parent cannot abide by the school's policies, or if we cannot adequately meet the needs of the child/family due to classroom size, budgetary limitations, or the inability to preserve the safety of the other children.***

Our goal is a secure, happy, self-confident child who can work and play with others. We want to work with our families to help with toileting, feeding and other self-regulating skills and with any other concerns that might arise.

CURRICULUM

Daily plans include learning activities appropriate to the developmental levels and various learning styles of each child. These activities are designed to facilitate the development of skills in reading and language arts; mathematics; science; social studies; art; music; fine and gross motor endeavors; faith development; and outdoor play.

Teachers use many methods of assessing each child's needs and progress. This includes information from parents, observations, anecdotal records, developmental scales, and screening instruments.

Because young children learn best through active involvement, the teachers set up many opportunities, based on the children's interests, designed for learning the foundational skills the children will need to be successful throughout their school years.

Studies show that successful children are those who are curious and motivated. Being able to engage in activities they have chosen makes learning enjoyable and promotes a love of learning.

READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

To be able to read, children must be able to express themselves and listen effectively. Activities develop these skills such as listening to stories, dramatizing stories, following oral directions, rhyming words in poems, stories, and songs, listening to, and identifying sounds in the environment, writing class books, keeping journals, relating personal experiences for the "Daily News", participating in "Show and Tell" and learning to use picture clues. Using games, puzzles, charts, and labeling, children learn to identify letters and frequently used words. Through games, poetry and songs, children learn the sounds of letters and language. Doing puzzles, playing with play dough and clay, painting and drawing using many kinds of instruments, building, woodworking, etc. all help develop the fine motor skills necessary for writing.

MATHEMATICS

Activities to develop understanding of mathematical concepts include such things as sorting and classifying, arranging objects according to size and shape, counting objects and classmates, measuring, block building, playing with balancing scales and working with puzzles, games, toys, and other activities that are designed to facilitate learning of numerals, one-to-one correspondence, and the meaning of numbers. Kindergarten children learn numerals to 100 and higher; they count by 2s, 5s and 10s; they solve math sentences and much more.

SCIENCE

Outdoor activities such as walks, gardening, observing, and collecting bugs, pulling flowers and weeds, and discovering the parts of plants, working with magnets, magnifying glasses; these are just a few of the kinds of things your child will encounter which are designed to build an understanding of scientific principles. In music, we experiment with sound; in the block corner, the children learn about balance and inclined planes. Items are put in plastic bags; the bags are twisted and spun. The children learn about stored energy. While doing an art project using an eyedropper to drop colored water on a coffee filter, the children learn about air pressure and

absorption. When preparing applesauce for snack, the children learn how heat changes the properties of an apple.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Being part of a group in a school environment is the beginning of an understanding of social studies. The children learn decision-making and problem-solving skills. They learn of the need to have rules. As they work in groups, they develop respect and understanding for others. Firefighters and police officers visit and the children learn about community helpers. Field trips, books and discussions broaden and enhance the children's understanding of community and their role in it. Kindergarten children take a pretend trip around the world, learning about the continents in a variety of engaging ways.

ART AND MUSIC

As previously noted, both art and music activities play an important role in helping to develop skills necessary for school success and they are fun! They encourage creative expression, independent thinking and help build self-esteem. Art activities develop visual discrimination, coordination, and a heightened awareness of the world. In music, the children learn to find their "singing voices" as opposed to their "speaking", "whispering" and "shouting" voices. They learn about pitch and rhythm, steady beat, opposites such as loud/soft, fast/slow, and high/low. They experience a variety of music - classical, folk and jazz – and learn about instruments of the orchestra and instruments from other lands.

FINE AND GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES

In the classroom, on the playground, in music and art activities, the children are developing and refining the skills necessary for reading, writing, and understanding the various social and scientific principles that make up the world. Puzzles, Legos and other building equipment, pencils, chalk, paintbrushes, and the like develop fine motor muscles, so necessary for writing. Climbing, twirling, balancing, ball playing, and other gross motor activities help develop eye/hand coordination and the ability to cross the midline (necessary for reading). Social development, teamwork, physical strength, coordination, dexterity, and alertness are among the skills developed by these activities.

- The kindergarten class uses the Handwriting Without Tears and Lucy Calkins Phonics along with the current Yellow School curriculum.
- Our PreK classes utilize the Learning Without Tears (Get Set for School) Curriculum in Conjunction with the existing Yellow School Curriculum.
- Three-year-old classes utilize the Frog Street Press Curriculum as a guideline for teaching in the classroom.

ALL CURRICULA PACKAGES ARE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE
AND WELL-RECOGNIZED.

RELIGION AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Faith development is an important part of the curriculum of the Yellow School. Chapel is held twice a week. During chapel and incorporated in our daily activities, we explore ways we know God; we interpret Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter from a Christian perspective; we pray daily; we model unconditional love so that the children might develop an understanding of God's love for us. Putting into practice the lessons of the New Testament which teach us to share with people in need (Romans 12:13) and to love with actions and in truth (1 John 3:17-18), the school has many outreach opportunities throughout the year as well.

FIELD TRIPS

During the year, there will be several field trips for pre-k and kindergarten children off campus as well as on site. These trips provide an opportunity for the children to explore their world and deepen their understanding of it. Field trips help broaden their base of experience, upon which all learning is based. **Children must wear school t-shirts on field trips.** We generally use the church buses to transport children on field trips.

A variety of materials are provided to engage children in active and meaningful learning. The children choose some activities; some are teacher directed. Routine tasks are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering the children's learning, self-help, and social skills.

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PLAY

Playing outdoors allows children to develop self-confidence, independence, and self-esteem. They also become aware of limits, boundaries, and challenges in their play. When children are used to playing outdoors, they are more likely to try new activities. Children can improve their health and fitness through outdoor play and leisure activity. The freedom and space of being outdoors can encourage more expansive movement leading to good physical exercise and helping prevent obesity.

The duration of physical activity at The Yellow School is a total of 60 minutes split between 30 minutes of morning play and 30 minutes of extended day play. The children will get the opportunity to play in our multi-purpose room if weather does not permit them to play on the playground.

The children receive structured play through table time toys. They also receive unstructured play through class centers and playground time.

We require that all children wear closed toe shoes, and clothing appropriate for the weather that day (i.e., jackets, long pants and long sleeves, short sleeves, shorts).

CELEBRATIONS

When sending food and/or drinks for the class, please make sure it does not contain nuts. The Yellow School requires food to be pre-packaged or delivered for parties. Homemade items are not permitted.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child's birthday is celebrated at snack time by singing "Happy Birthday" and with the wearing of a special birthday crown. Your child's teacher will contact you about scheduling a time to celebrate her/his birthday. Special cookies or small cupcakes make excellent birthday treats. **Please do NOT bring large cupcakes or cake.** Although the children sometimes request them, they are seldom eaten. **Also, please do NOT bring party favors, balloons, or the like. We are unable to hold birthday parties at the school. PLEASE DO NOT SEND BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS TO SCHOOL TO BE DISTRIBUTED.**

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

At the beginning of the year, room moms should distribute sign-up sheets to class parents (sign up genius online is easy to use). These signups are for bringing items for a holiday celebration: Halloween, Thanksgiving (for the 3-year-olds), Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Parents volunteer to bring a special snack (see birthday suggestions), holiday plates, napkins or 100% juice. All parents should have the opportunity to volunteer at one of these celebrations if they wish. We do try to keep all holiday celebrations low key so that the children do not get too overwhelmed. Therefore, as with birthdays, we ask that there be no party favors, balloons, etc. **We often have children with food allergies. Therefore, before bringing any snack to school, please check with your child's teacher for any pertinent allergy information. Remember, nothing with nuts in it.**

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Communication between school and home is very important. Your child's educational and emotional well-being is our highest priority. We encourage you to visit the school and to be as involved in the activities as you wish. Please do not wait for an invitation to participate. Schedule a time with the teachers; should you ever have a concern, please speak to your child's teacher and/or the director. We cannot help if we are not aware of your concern. Every effort will be made to address the issue. If any conflicts or concerns remain unresolved, we suggest that you speak to the Director of Early Childhood Programs. Please be assured that we will do all we can, within the

program's philosophy and licensing and accreditation standards, to come to a satisfactory solution.

The Confidential Information Form that you complete helps us know your child and we welcome any ideas and suggestions for working with your child throughout the year. If the teachers have any concerns about your child's behavior and/or development, they will contact you so that you and they can work together in determining what is best for your child.

If it were ever necessary to make a change that would affect a child, the parents would be notified/consulted first. The teachers and Director also make suggestions to help you in determining the best placement for your child as she/he moves on from year to year.

The following detail some of our means of communication:

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar, sent in your parent orientation folder, should be kept handy. On it you will find the schedule of the school year including dates of school photos, and other activities. **Since the calendar is published up to a year in advance, there are apt to be changes during the year.** Notes and emails will be sent home as reminders and/or informing you of any additions and/or changes which may occur throughout the year.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in January and/or February. Additional conferences can be and are held throughout the year at the request of either the parents or the teacher. The teachers' primary responsibilities during school hours and car line times are for the children. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please email her or call the school to arrange a convenient time.

LESSON PLANS

The teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities designed to teach the skills the children need to further their education based on the needs of the children in each class. An overview of the activities planned will be sent home the week before they are planned.

NEWSLETTER

Once a month, you will receive a newsletter with reminders, calendar events and changes, and updates about activities at the school. These will be sent in digital form by email. If you would like a hard copy, you may request one from the front office. Newsletters are also posted on the information board in The Yellow School front office.

NOTES AND EMAILS

Check your child's backpack each day for notes about your child's day, any important notes, reminders of events, incident reports (sent home if your child has gotten hurt), etc. Teachers will write periodic notes regarding your child; you will not receive a daily report. Many of our notes to parents regarding class or all school activities or other information will be sent in email form from the Director. We will also email reminders and announcements. If we ever have a concern about your child, we will contact you right away. We encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY

It is the policy of Yellow School that all email messages between parents and Yellow School staff be sent through the school emails provided or the Director. These email addresses are available upon request. **No emails concerning Yellow School may be sent to personal email addresses.**

SHARING PHOTOS AND PRIVACY POLICY

You are asked to sign permission forms to allow, or disallow, your children's pictures to be published in various venues. Just as you may not want us to post your child's picture on a website (or other places), others may not want their children's pictures shared via e-mail, Facebook, or any of the other myriad ways of sharing information that are available to us all. Therefore, we ask that you not send or post pictures of any children other than your own unless you have cleared it with all parents involved. Thank you for your help and cooperation. **Please do NOT create any class Facebook pages, blogs, etc.**

PARENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Each year we offer parent orientation meetings, parent-teacher meetings, our annual Book Fair and Art Show, end-of-year activities and social gatherings planned by individual classes.
- When taking field trips, we use the church buses to transport the children. We often ask parents to accompany the children on field trips. If you would like to participate in a field trip, please make arrangements, if necessary, for the care of siblings. **We are unable to take extra children on field trips.**
- You are welcome in the school, and we encourage your observations, comments, and suggestions. If you ever have a problem or concern about anything at the school, please let us know immediately by talking with the Director.

- Each classroom has two Room Moms who help recruit parents to go on field trips, make arrangements for snacks for holiday celebrations, plan teacher appreciation activities, etc. If you would like to be a Room Mom, please sign up on the volunteer form, at Parent Orientation or at Meet the Teacher.
- The Yellow School Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is composed of nine people, MDPC members and interested parents, who assist with school events and other matters necessary for providing the best education for your children. The committee meets once a month. If you are interested in serving on this committee, or know someone who might be, please contact a committee member or the school Director.

Should you have an article of interest or a special community event that you would like to share, please bring it to the office for approval. Nothing should be sent home without prior approval of the Director.

RESOURCES AND SPECIAL SERVICES

SCREENINGS

A developmental readiness test and vision, speech, hearing, and language screenings are scheduled each year for children in the pre-k and kindergarten classes. If there are concerns about a younger child, he or she may also participate in the screening process for an additional charge to the company. There is a minimal charge included in the program fee for these state mandated screenings and the readiness test for PreK and kindergarten.

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

We take great care to protect the children in our care and to keep them safe. It is important that our teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents are all educated and informed. All employees are required to have annual training in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children which shall include:

- warning signs of possible abuse and/or neglect.
- how to report a suspected incidence of abuse and/or neglect.
- awareness of prevention techniques for parents and employees.
- actions that a parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention.
- information about appropriate community organizations, therapists, etc.

Link for training: www.dfps.state.tx.us/training/Reporting/default.asp

Link for information on learning the signs of abuse and neglect:
<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/itsuptoyou/recognize.asp>

To report suspected abuse, call 1-800-252-5400 or visit www.dfps.state.tx.us

If you are a victim of abuse and need help, call 1-800-252-5400 Harris County Women's Center – Domestic Violence – 713-528-2121. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

PROFESSIONAL REFERRALS

The Yellow School can get you a referral for somewhere if you need help in finding a specialist for your child. Please email or talk to the Director of Early Childhood Programs to obtain this information.

THE STATE OF TEXAS WANTS YOU TO BE ASSURED OF THE FOLLOWING

(Gang-free zone and consumer product safety)

- House Bill 2086 states that licensed childcare programs are to notify parents about the new gang-free zone designation. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where certain gang-related activity is prohibited and is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. Specific locations where certain gang related criminal activity is now prohibited include, but is not limited to, public schools, playgrounds, video arcade facilities, and day care centers. Certain gang-related activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our program is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty.
- As of 8/31/09, I certify that all bulletins and notices issued by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission regarding unsafe children's products have been reviewed. I also certify that there are no unsafe children's products in the center of home except for the following: A product that is an antique or collectible children's product and is not used by, or accessible to any child, an unsafe children's product that is being retrofitted to make it safe and the product is not used by, or accessible to any child.
- Parents are welcome to review the State Minimum Standards and the school's most recent licensing report at any time. The report is posted on the bulletin board just inside the front door. Ask the Administrative Staff for a copy of the State Standards.
- Firearms are prohibited (concealed or open carry) within our program unless the individual is a law enforcement official who is trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty.