

Family Gatherings

Childcare Center



Parent Handbook

January 2025

Family Gatherings

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Family Gatherings

Parent Handbook

And

Parent Agreement/Responsibilities

Welcome to Family Gatherings. We have been a locally owned and family operated childcare center since 2017. It is important to define our parent policies and your responsibilities as a parent. Communication between staff, parents and children is vital to providing quality childcare. These policies exist for the safety and well-being of the children and parents. Policies are reviewed and updated annually or as necessary. If you have any questions concerning these policies, feel free to discuss them with the center director or management staff in the office at any time. We look forward to having you and your child/children become a part of our family.

Our Mission and Philosophy

To provide a quality, nurturing and educational environment that enhances every child's ability to learn and grow. Our programs are designed to promote learning and development in a safe and healthy environment, we provide opportunities for children to explore, create, and communicate with other children and adults. Honesty, trust, passion for excellence and love of learning are our core values and foundation.

Curriculum

Family Gatherings uses Fun Shine Express Curriculum to develop our core lesson plans. The foundations of our lesson plans are to lay the groundwork for a lifetime of learning. Our core approach focuses on the following concepts for the children to learn theme related vocabulary words, music, finger plays, science, dramatic play, creative art experiences, sensory mathematics, cooking, and educational resources to enhance learning. Our teachers carefully plan, adapt, or change any of the activities to meet the needs, abilities, and interests of their group of children to ensure developmental appropriateness for all learning styles. We provide the necessary foundation and environment so your child can grow, explore, and bloom.

Location

5430 Old Seguin Rd
San Antonio, TX 78219

Email: familygatheringscc@hotmail.com

Phone number: 210-661-6055.

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday
6:00 am – 6:00 pm

Ages we care for

6 weeks – 11 years

Late Pick Up Policy

If a child is not picked up after closing time an added late pickup fee of \$20.00 at 6:00pm and \$1.00 for each minute after 6:01pm will be charged to your account. The fees are due on the next scheduled day for your child to attend the center.

Repeated incidents of late pickups may result in a child's disenrollment. If your child is left at closing, staff will do the following.

1. Try to contact you by phone.
2. Try to contact your emergency contacts.
3. If the above-mentioned attempts are unsuccessful and you have failed to pick up the child 30 minutes past closing time, police or local authorities will be notified.

_____ Parent initials

Behavior Expectations/Challenging Behavior

All parents and staff must sign off on the Licensing Discipline and Guidance policy. At Family Gatherings, we use positive approaches to guide children towards their goals. The teacher will use positive redirection, conflict resolution, observation, and documentation to aid family discussions to correct the root cause of disruptive behaviors. Family Gatherings works to treat each individual child with care and respect while teaching children self-discipline to make better choices every day. We ask parents to support us by helping role models with positive behavior and language while at the center. In cases where there is an issue of constant inappropriate behavior, parents will have to attend a parent conference to outline and agree on a behavior plan. Follow up will be made with the parent daily until the issue is resolved. Continual communication with parents and guardians will be kept concerning your child's behavior and ongoing documentation will be provided. Staff will be sensitive to the diverse cultural beliefs and values of families.

_____ Parent initials

Parent Conferences

Please do not use drop/pick up time to communicate lengthy concerns with your child's teacher as this can be a distraction to the care of other children in the classroom. Conferences are offered to parents twice a year (Fall and Spring) or by request to discuss any concerns they might have or that the teacher might have. It is an opportunity to communicate, partner and set goals for your child.

_____ Parent initials

Use of Developmental Milestone Checklists

Our program uses developmental milestone checklists to help you, and your child's teacher track your child's development and name potential concerns. Checklists help your child's teacher understand what milestones children should reach at certain ages. Checklists aid teachers in seeing, recording, and evaluating your child's skills, knowledge, behaviors, and accomplishments. They are intended to help teachers watch what children know and can do, and to aid teachers in developing their lesson plans. Checklists can help teachers identify potential developmental concerns, such as if a child is reaching milestones much earlier or later than their peers. When necessary, these concerns can be discussed with a pediatrician or other professional. Your child's teacher will complete the developmental milestone checklist twice a year.

_____ Parent initials

Biting

Biting is quite common behavior among children. Most Children bite to cope with a challenge or fulfill a need. Children under the age of 2 years old bite and older children are also capable of biting. Lack of verbal communication is the most common and can be redirected. We welcome parents' positive suggestions on helping their child through this milestone. Our staff does everything they can to intervene and prevent most bites, but sometimes they still happen. The center documents who are biting and who is being bitten with Incident Reports. If a child is biting aggressively or their biting is not manageable after three (3) bites in a day, the child will be sent home and a conference with the parent to help resolve the issue.

_____ Parent initials

Communication with Parents

Parents/guardians are always welcome to watch and take part in program activities with prior notification. You are welcome to review and discuss with the Center Director any questions or concerns about center policies and procedures at any time. Family involvement is particularly important to the success of not only our program but also your child(ren). There are several ways for families to get involved with the center's activities and the experiences while your child is enrolled in Family Gatherings, opportunities for parent involvement include class parties, parent teacher conferences, holiday parties and center family events. The center will also take part in community resources, as well as training/information concerning child development and parenting skills/development.

_____ Parent initials

Parents will be notified of major events; communicable illnesses and other incidents that affect their children. Notices and letters will be posted on ProCare and classroom doors. Parents may also communicate via our center email: familygatheringscc@hotmail.com and the center software ProCare. Parents are welcome to update their contact information through email, text on ProCare or calling the center. Parents may also send a written note to their child's teacher. Parents are encouraged to keep their contact information updated and current. Direct communication by telephone will occur depending on the circumstances. Teachers will issue daily reports and developmental assessments to let parents know about their child's day, activities, and progress. Parents will also receive incident/accident reports letting them know their child had an incident/accident during the day. Phone calls and ProCare are one of our main means of communication for general information, if it is an important matter a phone call will be made to ensure you are aware.

_____ Parent initials

Drop Off and Pick Up

We have several options for parents.

1. Parents may drop off at the front door and a staff member will walk them to their classroom.
2. Parents who choose to park and come into the center must walk their child in their classroom, be certain that a staff member acknowledges their child to ensure face to face contact.
3. Parents may choose to pick their child up at the front door and a staff member will get their child for them.
4. When picking up your child in the center, be certain that a staff member acknowledges your child is leaving.
5. For your child's safety an authorized adult must always go with your child while in and around the center.
6. A 9am (no later) is best for children to be able to take part in curriculum activities. It also proves a good routine and schedule.
7. No child(ren) will be accepted after 9am. Unless child(ren) has a doctor's note or if a call was made to the center before 9am.
8. No children can be dropped off during Naptime 12 pm to 2 pm.

_____ Parent initials

A child will not be released to anyone not on the Pick-up List or prior notification. Photo identification is needed and checked by anyone authorized by the parent/guardian. If an emergency arises that an unauthorized individual is needed to pick up your child, parents must provide a written release or verbal consent for the pickup and the individual must provide photo identification.

_____ Parent initials

Termination/Withdrawal of Care

Sometimes it may be necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment. The decision is made based on several factors:

1. The best interest of the child
2. Interests of the children in the classroom
3. Health and well-being of everyone at the center.

The decision to disenroll is not made until all avenues of accommodation and intervention have been exhausted.

Children can also be disenrolled for

1. Abuse of other children, staff and company property by a child or parent
2. Continued violation of center policies
3. Disruptive or dangerous behavior by a child or parent
4. Inability of the center to meet the needs of the child
5. For non-payment of tuition and fees

Family Gatherings reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a child or family at any time, for any reason when it is in the best interests of the center, staff, and the children in our care. When possible, prior notice of terminations to find alternative care will be given.

_____ Parent initials

Enrollment and Program Options:

Full Day Program

After School Care

Summer Camp

Drop-Ins

Children must be at least 6 weeks of age and no older than 11 years of age upon enrollment. All registration paperwork in the enrollment packet must be complete prior to your child's first day of enrollment. The registration fee must also be paid in full to complete enrollment. A medical record must be submitted that includes complete physical, a current immunization record that meets the requirements of the Health Department for daycares. Children enrolled in schools will note on the registration paperwork the school the child is attending and that holds the immunization information.

_____ Parent initials

Waiting Lists

Due to the demand for quality childcare, there may not be a place at once for your child at Family Gatherings. We do keep a waiting list. As openings occur at the center, we call the families in the order they were taken on the waitlist. Priority will be given to children currently enrolled, and their siblings not yet enrolled at Family Gatherings. Family Gatherings accepts all children on a first-come, first-served basis.

_____ Parent initials

Tuition and Fees:

The person that registers a child at Family Gatherings will be named the primary parent/guardian and therefore the customer, and party responsible for the payment on the account. The customer is the managing party of the child, and any decisions concerning the child, except for a Child Protective Case, a divorce decree or guardianship legal documentation. Documentation must be given upon registration and any updated court orders must be given upon issuance. Child custody is a legal matter and Kirby Police will be called if there is a discrepancy between individuals and taken outside the daycare. Parties will refrain from calling Family Gatherings to check on a child unless they are our customer, or it is court ordered.

_____ Parent initials

Your decision to keep your child at home for any reason does not change your responsibility for the payment of your tuition in full for that period of absence, you will pay as part of your contractual agreement. Your child may not re-enter the center without this payment being paid in full. Upon re-entry to the center depending on the length of absence, you may have to pay a re-registration fee. If you withdraw your child from Family Gatherings, your registration and tuition will not be refunded, nor will credit be given unless there are a certain circumstance an agreement with the director.

_____ Parent initials

Tuition is expected in full, there is no credit given for single days. Daycare prices are set for weekly rates unless the child is a drop in. No refunds are given for partial weeks, once the child is registered and attends, payment is needed for the term of the contract.

_____ Parent initials

Tuition is due and payable weekly on the first scheduled day of attendance for the current week. A \$30.00 late fee will be assessed to tuition not paid on time by the close of business Tuesday for the current week. There are no refunds unless there is a certain circumstance an agreement with the director.

_____ Parent initials

Children enrolled in the Child Care Service with the Texas Workforce Commission and have a co-payment will need to make the weekly payment prior to the week of service.

_____ Parent initials

All non-sufficient checks will be charged a \$30.00 NSF fee to your account.

If more than two personal checks are returned due to non-sufficient funds within a calendar year, future payments must be made by money order.

_____ Parent initials

For each added child in your immediate family that enrolls, you will be entitled to a 10% discount, which is applied to the lowest tuition rate. This discount is available only to accounts when full tuition is paid in advance/on time. Discounts do not apply to registration fees, activity fee, agency co-pays or other special promotions, and cannot be combined with any other discount or promotion.

_____ Parent initials

An annual non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 for each family is due every year along with updated enrollment forms. Updating your personal information every year or as needed is vital to keeping an open line of communication between the center and parents. It also makes it easier to contact parents if emergencies arise.

_____ Parent initials

A written 2-week notice is needed if you plan to withdraw your child from Family Gatherings.

_____ Parent initials

Holidays, Absences and Vacations

Family Gatherings is a year-round daycare. Family Gatherings scheduled Holidays and closures will be posted and updated every October.

_____ Parent initials

Closures unexpectedly due to severe weather or breakdown of equipment that does not meet the safety of our children can happen, but full tuition payment is still charged and not based on actual attendance, your payment is to keep their space/enrollment.

_____ Parent initials

Parents of school age children that we pick up daily will need to notify our office of your child's absence from their primary elementary or if they are going to be parent pick at the school. We let our van drivers know ahead of time so their van runs can run on time without delays.

_____ Parent initials

Parents are asked to notify the center when your child is out due to illness or just absent for any reason. Family Gatherings does offer 50% off for vacation once a year after completing a year with us. Tuition must be paid in full to ensure your child(ren) space/enrollment at the center.

_____Parent initials

Picture/Photography

Family Gatherings uses ProCare to communicate with our families. ProCare is used to include you in your child's activities throughout the day, we take photos in the center to share with you. The photos document your child's experiences, progress, adventures, and only plain old fun. We show the photos in the hallway and community boards throughout the center like a family album. Photos are given to parents after displayed.

_____I accept photo agreement _____I do not accept photo agreement.

****If Family Gatherings is going to use any photos for any program planning, marketing, or public relations- the company will also seek written consent/permission (in conjunction with this agreement) from the parents to use the image of their child/ children.

Clothing and Personal Items

Children should wear comfortable, washable, and casual clothing for playing. For the safety of the children, shoes should be closed toed tennis shoes. Winter clothes should be provided for children when needed. Parents are recommended to always have an added change of clothes for their children. Personal belongings and toys should be left at home. Family Gatherings are not responsible for breakage or replacement of toys from home. It is the parent's responsibility to see that their child does not bring anything into the center that is a danger to others.

_____Parent initials

Children who are not potty trained will need disposable diapers or pull-ups for health and sanitary purposes. Potty training is a process that requires the child to show interest and a partnership with parents actively training at home. This process should start at home first and be continued here at the center. The potty-training process requires lots of changes of clothing and on occasion soiled undergarments cannot be saved for health and sanitary reasons and will be disposed of.

_____Parent initials

Inclement Weather

If inclement weather occurs that affects the city of San Antonio, Family Gatherings will follow Judson Independent School District lead for school closures due to weather or natural disasters.

_____Parent initials

Physical Activity

Our daily schedule provides opportunities for children to engage in physical activities twice per day. Children take part in age-appropriate outdoor play as part of their daily curriculum. If the weather does not allow outside play, children can play inside in large group activities (parachute, duck duck goose or other organized games, etc.) in their classroom.

_____Parent initials

Screen Time Policies

Electronic devices and media are only used for educational purposes. Children less than 2 years of age are not allowed any screen time. School-age children are not allowed to use any electronic devices or cell phones while in attendance at the center. Screen time allowed by the center is limited to 60 minutes per day. Screen time can be used once during either the morning or the afternoon as a severe weather alternative.

_____Parent initials

Meals

All meals are approved by the CACFP program for their nutritional appropriateness. Menus will be posted, and any substitutions will be noted.

_____ Parent initials

Family Gatherings will provide breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack to children attending full-time. After school children will receive supper and evening snacks during the school year except when the school is closed and then they will follow the daycare schedule food distribution.

_____ Parent initials

Any known food allergies should be brought to the attention of the staff upon enrollment.

Detailed instructions about the food and the steps that need to be taken to avoid that food, or item must be in writing. Special or restricted dietary needs require a doctor's note (State licensing requires) and need to be on file at the center.

_____ Parent initials

Breakfast is served from 8 am to 8:30 am. We ask parents to bring the children in after 8:30am to make sure children have had their breakfast before arriving at the center. Lunch starts at 11am and ends at 12 pm (noon). Juice (100%) is only served once a day. And children under 12 months may not have juice.

_____ Parent initials

Parents are not allowed to bring in outside food unless requested by the teacher for a classroom party or project. Our center is a peanut free zone.

_____ Parent initials

Breastfeeding Policy

At Family Gatherings, we encourage breastfeeding infants. Breast milk can be stored and served if mom chooses and supplies the milk. Moms may also breastfeed in the nursery. If mom prefers privacy, the director's office or a closed classroom may be used to accommodate mom and baby. Our parent board has many listed resources and community groups to aid our moms with any needs or support in breastfeeding and overall, wellbeing.

_____ Parent initials

Illness and Health

Health Check are done at the beginning of the day. If we see your child developing symptoms of illness during the day, we will isolate your child and call you to pick up your child. Your child must be picked up within 1 hour. For the health and well-being of your child and others, a child must be kept home if he/she is sick or has a contagious illness until symptom free for 24 hours or with a doctor's note that states the child is able to return to care as per licensing minimum standards. Children sent home with a fever must be 24 hours fever free before returning.

_____ Parent initials

If your child has a communicable illness, please inform the center so we can take the necessary precautions and inform other parents to take precautions. In certain cases when an illness is contagious and communicable, a doctor's note saying the child is no longer contagious will be needed.

_____ Parent initials

In case of illness, accident, or injury, we will attempt to reach you first. If we are unable to reach you, the emergency contact persons will be contacted. If a child does not respond, is having trouble breathing or is having a seizure, we will call 911. In your enrollment package, there is a form authorizing Family Gatherings to act on your behalf if there is an emergency. By completing this form, you are authorizing Family Gatherings to call an ambulance. If no one is available a staff member will ride with the child to the hospital of your choice as noted on the registration form. The staff member will stay with the child until the parent arrives.

_____ Parent initials

Medication

All medications must be in their original container and include a current label. Medications must have expiration date. All medications will be stored at the center in a locked box out of the reach of children, in the office.

_____ Parent initials

No medication prescribed will be dispensed without written permission and complete instructions filled out in the medicine log in the front office. No injections will be given.

No medication will be dispensed in a manner that is contrary to the label directions (medication needs to be age appropriate) without a doctor's written instructions.

Family Gatherings will only administer medications that are three or more times a day.

Medicine that is twice a day can be administered at home and will not be dispensed at the center.

_____ Parent initials

Family Gatherings has the unilateral right to refuse or stop administration of any product or medicine if/or

1. An adverse reaction result
2. The product has expired.
3. The child is ill or injured.
4. The product can be administered before or after childcare.
5. The medicine log is not filled out completely.
6. For any reason it is in the best interest of the child

_____ Parent initials

Field Trips and Transportation

From time to time, the staff may take children on age-appropriate field trips. Prior notice will be given using a calendar or notice from the center. Your permission for your child to take part is shown on the field trip form. The center will obtain a signed permission slip, which will detail the information about the trip. All field trips start at the center and end at the center. The parent/guardian will pay the cost for transportation and field trip fees.

_____ Parent initials

Children and staff members must adhere to all safety standards such as wearing seat belts while in the van. Transportation includes after school pick-up and field trips. All children must have a signed transportation agreement to ride the van. Parent and emergency information must be kept in the van on children being transported. Our transportation program is subject to change.

_____ Parent initials

Every year the van routes change according to enrollment and what the center can provide. Space is limited.

_____ Parent initials

Licensing Information and Mandated Reporting of Abuse

As a licensed facility, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services has the right to audit, review staff and children's records. Licensing may also help to interview children, monitor, and observe to ensure the comfort and protection of the children. Please be assured that the center will always strive to adhere to all county and state regulations governing safety, fire, and nutrition and child/staff ratios. Licensing information and inspections are posted in the front lobby for all parents to review at any time.

_____ Parent initials

As caring and concerned childcare providers, it is the law to report all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Family Gatherings staff have been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. To report abuse or neglect call 1-800-252-5400 or go online at www.txabusehotline.org.

_____ Parent initials

Emergency Evacuations Lockdowns and Weather-related incidents

Fire drills are held monthly at the center. Should an emergency occur that causes the building to be evacuated, the children and staff will relocate across the street to Kirby Middle School at 5441 Old Seguin Rd. San Antonio, TX 78219. Parents will be notified as soon as possible and asked to pick up their child if the emergency is expected to last a significant amount of time. If you are at the center when we are doing a fire drill, please exit the building along with the children and staff as instructed by the management.

_____ Parent initials

Quarterly lockdowns and weather-related incidents drills are done to ensure our students know what to do if an incident occurs. If you are at the center during these drills, please follow the instructions given to you during the time of the drill or incident.

_____ Parent initials

Hearing and Vision Policy

All children aged 4 years and older must be screened for hearing and vision. A Hearing and Vision Screening is usually done at the child's 4-year wellness checkup. Please provide the center with the results so they can be filed in their enrollment folder for the State to review.

_____ Parent initials

Animals/ Classroom Pets

Some classrooms may feature a class pet. Parents will be notified when an animal is on premises. Children will only observe and investigate animal habits. Animals that show any signs of illness will not be managed. Good hygiene and hand washing will be conducted after handling or meeting an animal or items used by the animal. Documentation of animal vaccinations or statements of health will be kept on file if required by state law.

_____ Parent initials

Babysitting Policy

Family Gatherings discourages its staff from babysitting children enrolled in our center. If babysitting arrangements are made between staff and parents, it is with the understanding and knowledge that the staff cares for their child as a private citizen.

_____ Parent initials

The care must be away from the center property. The center cannot be responsible for its employees away from the center, outside their working hours and will not be liable for their acts or omission of acts when not on the company property.

_____ Parent initials

Children with Special Needs/Accommodating Families and Children

Our program is designed to be inclusive of all children, including those with disabilities and special learning and developmental needs. Family Gatherings will accept children with special needs if reasonable accommodations are possible. We will require parents and the child's doctor to give as much information about the child prior to enrollment to make sure we are able to meet the needs he/she needs in our center.

We will do our best to accommodate home languages (we provide materials in English and Spanish), special needs and differing abilities and cultural backgrounds. Family Gatherings welcomes and encourages parents to look for outside resources and support-like speech, occupational and other therapists to aid children; we have an open-door policy for therapy visits at our center. We welcome cultural diversity and ask parents to share their culture and traditions with our children and teachers. Sharing is the best way to learn and enriches our community.

Below are ways that our program will partner with families:

- We will provide space to accommodate sessions if specific therapies are needed during the day while the child is in our care.
- Participation in all comprehensive care meetings if needed.
- Complete supporting documentation from an authorized medical professional for any accommodations related to the child's physical or developmental needs.
- Provide materials and resources in parent/child's primary language.
- Provide opportunities for cultural inclusiveness by hosting cultural events throughout the year.

_____ Parent initials

Embracing Diversity

We do not discriminate against children, parents, and co-workers, for any reason. This includes but is not limited to race, color of skin, religion, creed, gender, disability, military status, or national origin. All are welcome at our center.

_____ Parent initials

We hope these policies are helpful and strengthen our partnership. We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to caring for your child and helping them Bloom.

*Family Gatherings
5430 d Seguin Rd.
San Antonio, TX 78219
(210)661-6055
familygatheringscc@hotmail.com*

I, _____
(Parent's name)

- Have read and understand the following document entitled.
Parent Handbook and Parent Agreement /Responsibilities.
- My tuition is \$_____ weekly and will change to the next/current tuition rate at the center as my child or child(ren) transition to the next age group based on his/her age(s) or developmental need(s).
- Name of my child or children attending Family Gatherings.

X _____
Parent's Signature Date

X _____
Director Signature Date