

PARENT HANDBOOK



NOTICE: HIGHER TRAILS CHURCH AND ITS PARENT'S DAY OUT PROGRAM ARE NOT A CHILD-CARE FACILITY OR DAY-CARE CENTER AS DEFINED UNDER THE TEXAS HUMAN RESOURCES CODE SECTION 42.041 AND IS THEREFORE NOT LICENSED BY THE STATE OF TEXAS.

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OUR MISSION

Higher Trails Parents Day Out (PDO) is an early childhood development ministry of Higher Trails Church and operates in accordance with its constitution, declaration of faith, and bylaws. Our declaration of faith can be found on our website.

Our mission is to offer a quality, Christian-based educational preschool program that ministers to each child and family. We provide a positive Christian atmosphere that promotes mental, physical, social, educational and spiritual growth. Children learn in age appropriate classrooms through structured, educationally driven activities. We believe preschool should be a safe environment where children learn in a fun and engaging way! At Higher Trails PDO our goal is to prepare children for their future education and to help them develop an understanding of who God is and why He is the center of our lives.

CURRICULUM

Higher Trails PDO uses “ABC Jesus Loves Me” as our primary curriculum. ABC Jesus Loves Me provides five comprehensive, research-based curricula for ages 1-5 that focus on academics, development, and Bible learning through play. This curriculum is designed to prepare students for kindergarten and also build a firm foundation in Jesus.

PROGRAMS

We offer classes for children ages 2 years through 5 years. All classes are Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm. Classes start on the first Tuesday in Sept and will last until the second Thursday in May.

Age on or before September 1st*

Twos & Threes: 2 and 3 years old

Pre-K: 4 and 5 years old (must be potty trained)

*There are occasionally exceptions to the age requirements

ADMISSION

Children are placed in classes based on their age as of September 1st of the current school year. Before a child's first day of attendance, the following must be on file with the Higher Trails PDO office:

- Registration Form and non-refundable fee
- Immunization records or Exemption Affidavit
- Emergency Information Form
- Permission and Release Form



TUITION & FEES

The tuition for both programs is \$160/month per child. If more than one child in a family is enrolled, tuition will be reduced to \$150/month for other siblings. Tuition must be paid by the first day of every month*. If tuition has not been received by the 7th day of the month, a \$25 late fee will be charged. If the tuition has not been paid by the 15th day of the month, Higher Trails PDO reserves the right to withdraw a student. Please feel free to discuss with the administrator any problems encountered with payment of fees.

Tuition payments are the same each month and are not discounted for holidays/PDO closures. NO CREDIT will be issued in the event that your child is absent.

*A \$25 fee will be charged for all returned payments. Higher Trails Church reserves the right to request cash for all future payments when a payment is returned due to insufficient funds.

REGISTRATION FEES:

A \$100 Registration Fee is due for the school year and is non-refundable. If registering after the start of the program and before March 2025, a full registration fee is still required. If registering after March 1st the registration fee will be \$50.

CANCELLATION OF ENROLLMENT

We understand for many children, this is their first classroom experience, and we will work diligently with each child and family to make this the best possible experience. After multiple attempts and communication with parents, if it is determined by Higher Trails PDO staff* that a child's participation or development is not ready for this type of activity, the school reserves the right to request cancellation of enrollment. In this event, any unused tuition would be refunded.

If for other reasons, a child is withdrawn by the parents/guardians, Higher Trails PDO will require two weeks written notice and any unused tuition will not be refunded.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Any day Bland ISD is closed or delay starts due to inclement weather, Higher Trails PDO will be **closed**. Parents/Guardians will be contacted to pick up their child if unsafe conditions arise while children are already in school. There will be no tuition or schedule adjustment due to inclement weather.

ILLNESS

If a school closure is determined to be medically necessary, there will be no tuition or schedule adjustment.

HOLIDAYS

Please refer to the Higher Trails PDO Calendar located at the back of the handbook.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

ARRIVAL

We do not accept children prior to 8:50 am. This enables our staff time to prepare for your child's arrival and for class to start at 9:00 am. Parents must walk their child to class and sign them in every day. When dropping off your child, please stay outside the door while your child is entering to help with a smooth transition to class.

DISMISSAL

Higher Trails PDO dismissal begins at 1:55 pm and all children must be picked up by 2:15 pm. Children will be released **ONLY** to a parent or person designated by the parent on the enrollment form and they must show their driver's license.

Occasionally, parents/guardians will arrive early to pick up their children. We understand that this is necessary for appointments, travel plans, etc. Please let teachers know at drop off if you will be picking up early. If your child is in a class that naps, we ask you to pick up before nap time to prevent waking the class.

LATE PICK UP

If a child will be picked up late, please notify Higher Trails PDO staff before 2:00 pm. After 2:15 pm parents must pick up their child at the Higher Trails PDO office. Late pick up fee will be assessed at \$1/minute upon 3rd late pickup.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

(CONTINUED)

PARKING

Please do not leave other children unattended in your vehicle, per the Texas Penal Code, Title 5, Chapter 22, Section 10, which addresses the legal ramifications associated with leaving a child in a vehicle unattended.

Keep in mind there are other events and visitors to the church throughout the school year. Please help us continue to provide a safe environment by maintaining a slow speed and reserving handicap parking for those with required handicap placards; for which the penalties are outlined within the Texas Penal Code, Title 7, Chapter 681, Section 10.

The parking lot is a NO CELL PHONE area. Please give your full attention to keeping all of the children and staff safe during this time.

RELEASE OF CHILD

Children will only be released to persons authorized on the Emergency Release Form filed in the Higher Trails PDO office. Written and verbal notice to the Administrator must be given for any changes in drop off and pick up. Persons who pick up children under special circumstances will be asked to show their drivers license to verify their identity. A copy of the driver's license will be made. There are no exceptions to this rule. Our main concern is keeping your child safe. In an emergency situation, please notify the Higher Trails PDO office at (430) 336-1029

CHURCH BUILDING DOORS

Because safety is a top priority at Higher Trails we have campus wide security measures. All exterior doors are locked during business hours. The doors will be unlocked from 8:55 am until 9:15 am for student drop off and again from 1:55 pm until 2:15 pm for student pick up. If you need to enter the building while the doors are locked please call the office at (430) 336-1029.

COMMUNICATION

CONFERENCES

Arrival and dismissal are not the best times to have a conference with your child's teacher as teachers are very focused on the children in their care. We don't publish our teachers phone numbers out of respect for their family time, but we are more than happy to schedule conferences during school hours. Please let the PDO Administrator know of your concerns and a desire for a conference.

CLASSROOM FOLDER

This is our main method of communication. Higher Trails PDO newsletters, notifications, requests, reminders and notes from the teachers will all go home in your child's folder. Please check your child's backpack and folder daily to stay informed and ensure that your child does not miss out on a special activity or event. This is also a very convenient and discreet way for you to communicate with your child's teacher anything you think would be helpful to share with them involving your child.

MEDICAL CONCERNS

MEDICAL RECORDS

An Immunization record or Exemption Affidavit and a notarized Emergency Release Information Form must be on file prior to the child's first day of attendance. A written notice of allergies, physical problems or special limitations regarding the child must be provided by the parent/guardian to the PDO Administrator at the time of enrollment and as new conditions arise.

We may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal or religious beliefs. Exemption Affidavit must be requested from the Texas Department of State Health Services. If you have filed for an exemption, we must have the original Exemption Affidavit on file. Higher Trails PDO reserves the right to amend our immunization requirements in the case of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease.

MEDICAL CONCERNS

(CONTINUED)

ILLNESS

It is important for us to provide a healthy and safe environment for all students and teachers. For that reason, we are diligent in enforcing our illness policies. If, in the opinion of the teachers or the administrator, a child becomes ill at school, parents/guardians will be notified and will need to make arrangements to pick up the child within 30 minutes. Higher Trails PDO does not have a nurse or sick room.

A child will not be admitted to school if any of the following exist:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- An undiagnosed rash
- Cold and/or heavy sinus discharge
- Fever of 100 degrees or higher

Children should be free of fever at least 24 hours, without the aid of medication, before returning to school. In cases of a communicable disease being suspected in the classroom (chicken pox, etc.), parents/guardians will be notified in writing or by phone. Parents/Guardians may be required to obtain a physician's statement certifying that the child is well before the child returns to school following an absence due to contagion. Illness policies can change at any time, and will be made with the most positive and least disruptive outcome in mind.

ALLERGIES

Parents/guardians are responsible for informing Higher Trails PDO about their child's potential risk for anaphylaxis and for ensuring the provisions of ongoing health information and necessary medical supplies. The church will take reasonable measures to avoid allergens for affected children.

Even with the church's best efforts, staff and parents/ guardians need to be aware that it is **not possible** to achieve a completely allergen-free environment. However, the church will take precautions to reduce the risk of a child having an anaphylactic reaction by developing strategies to minimize the presence of allergens in the Parent's Day Out area.

MEDICAL CONCERNS

(CONTINUED)

EPI-PEN POLICY

When leaving a child in the care of a Parent's Day Out Program, parents of a child with severe allergies must bring two epi-pens in their original box with the prescription label. These pens will be kept in the Parent's Day Out Office for emergency access. Epi-pens must be current and not have expired expiration dates.

Parents must also complete the Allergy Action Plan which will be kept in a notebook in the office. The Food Allergy Action Plan must also include a picture of the child.

MEDICATION

If you give your child any medication before coming to school, please inform your child's teacher. Medicine often affects the way your child responds in class. Higher Trails PDO will NOT administer medication to a child during the school day. If parents/guardians find it necessary for their child to receive medication during the school day, they may come to the school to administer such medication.

ACCIDENTS/INJURY

In case of an accident, a parent/guardian will be notified in writing (minor incident) or by phone. If such persons are unavailable to come and care for the child and additional care is required, the child will be taken to the doctor or hospital specified by the parent/guardian on the Emergency Release Form. For this reason, it is imperative that the school have the necessary information.

EMERGENCY

If there is a medical injury or emergency that requires immediate professional care, we will not hesitate to call 911. The Higher Trails PDO staff have been trained in emergency procedures and if necessary will perform CPR until medical personnel arrive. Parents or guardians will be notified immediately.

LUNCH, SNACKS, & BIRTHDAYS

LUNCH

Children will bring a lunch and non-carbonated beverage from home each day. A cold pack needs to be put in each child's lunch box if perishable foods are included. Please package your child's lunch to prevent spoilage. Prepare a simple lunch with foods that your child can eat easily. Please ensure food does not require teacher preparation beyond opening container lids. Parents need to pre-cut any foods that could be a choking hazard before packing it for the child's lunch.

Please note, we are unable to frigate or heat food up for children. Candy and carbonated beverages should not be included in lunches. If there is an allergy in your child's class, we will notify you. All children will be encouraged to be as self-sufficient at lunch time as possible.

SNACKS

A snack will be served to the children, which generally consists of water and goldfish, cheerios, or veggie straws. Occasionally teachers will plan a special snack that ties in with what they are learning that day. Please let your teachers know if your child isn't able to have certain foods.

BIRTHDAYS

Since birthdays are such an important day in a child's life, parents/guardians are allowed to send in special treats to celebrate as long as they are store bought. Please consult your child's teacher to make arrangements. If birthday party invitations are distributed at Higher Trails PDO, please include every child in the class.



WHAT TO BRING

Labeling - All items must be labeled with your child's name.

2'S & 3'S:

- Backpack large enough to accommodate a pocket sized folder
- Lunch box or sack
- Plastic or stainless cup/ water bottle
- Supply of disposable diapers/pull ups and wipes (if needed)
- Change of clothes (if your child is potty trained please include underwear)
- Nap Supplies: Nap mat, blanket, lovey, etc.

PRE-K:

- Backpack large enough to accommodate a pocket sized folder
- Lunch box or sack
- Plastic or stainless cup/ water bottle
- Change of clothes including underwear
- Nap Supplies: Nap mat, blanket, lovey, etc.

TOILET TRAINING

It is our goal to meet the needs of each child. Teachers will work with each child on an individual basis to assist efforts at home toward toileting success. Older children are assumed to have toileting skills, although we recognize occasional accidents may occur. All children entering our Pre-K class must be potty trained by the first day of school.

If the child or parent has asked us to help in the bathroom, we will do so, leaving the door slightly ajar. At Higher Trails PDO we feel it is important to give opportunities for children to develop self-help skills such as toileting and hand washing. We encourage children to be independent in this area but will help as needed.

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed comfortably for messy, active play. Children will be playing outside daily, therefore closed toed shoes would be the most appropriate. All extra clothing must be clearly marked with the child's name. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. All children should have a COMPLETE set of weather appropriate change of clothing in case of accidents.

Please dress your children that are toilet training in clothing that is easy for them to take off and on. We recommend elastic waist shorts or pants, because they are ideal for giving preschoolers the greatest amount of success in the toilet training process. Please send disposable diapers each day for children who are still in diapers.

TOYS

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home to school. Teachers will inform you of any share time (show and tell) activities when your child can bring items from home.

DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

DISCIPLINE

The goal of Higher Trails PDO is to ensure that we have safe classroom environments in which each child is able to grow, learn, and begin to practice self-control.

All disciplines will be consistent, age-appropriate and aimed at teaching acceptable classroom behavior and self-control. We focus on positive behavior reinforcement, redirection, reminders, and brief supervised removal from the situation as needed.

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

This plan is designed to provide a safe and loving environment for each child that attends our program. We hope to include the parent/guardian at all levels of this program so that you are fully aware and involved in the behavior management of your child.

Aggressive or out-of-control behavior that results in intentional harm to himself/herself or others will be noted in an Incident Report. These types of behavior can include, but are not limited to: biting, kicking, hitting, yelling, or persistent disrespect to students or teachers.

An Incident Report will be signed by the teacher and director. A copy will be given to the parent/guardian. This ensures that all concerned parties are aware of the incident and can be involved in addressing the behavior.

DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

(CONTINUED)

STEP ONE

When a child behaves in a way that is disobedient, disrespectful, or harmful to himself or others, the teacher will use techniques such as positive reinforcement for positive behavior, redirection, communication, and/or time out. If very difficult behavior occurs where the child does not respond to the normal ways of gaining cooperation, a brief supervised separation from the group may be used at the admin's desk. The parent/guardian will be notified at pick-up time.

STEP TWO

If the undesired behavior continues, the teacher will contact the PDO Administrator and an Incident Report will be sent home with the child.

STEP THREE

If the undesired behavior continues, an Incident Report will be sent home requesting a conference between the teachers, administrator and the child's parent/guardian to discuss modification of the behavior.

STEP FOUR

If the undesired behavior continues after the parent/guardian, teacher, administrator conference, an Incident Report will be sent home and the parents/guardians will be required to meet with the PDO Administrator to determine if their child is to continue in the program.

Repeated behavioral incidents will not be tolerated so as to protect the safety and well being of the other children and teachers in the classroom.

REGISTRATION FORM



Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____ M | F

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION (1)

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____ Work #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION (2)

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____ Work #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

How did you hear about our program? _____

INFORMATION/DISABILITIES

Please list any information about your child that you would like us to be aware of, such as a food allergy, physical needs, etc.: _____

Office Use Only



Registration:

Check

Cash

Credit/Debit Card

2's & 3's

Pre-K

Date of Admission: _____

Date of Withdrawal: _____

AUTHORIZED GUARDIANS FOR RELEASE

I hereby authorize Higher Trails Church PDO to allow my child to leave the facility **ONLY** with the following persons (other than parents). Children will only be released to a guardian designated by the parent after verification of ID.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

PLEASE CHECK IN THE BOX IF YOU GIVE PERMISSION FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- I give permission to Higher Trails Church to use my child's pictures for various school projects such as memory books, crafts, etc.
- I give permission to Higher Trails Church to use my child's pictures on the church website, PDO website page, and/or the PDO Facebook page. No names will ever be listed with a child's picture.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

IMMUNIZATION RECORD

- I have provided Higher Trails PDO with a copy of my child's most current immunizations.
- I have provided Higher Trails PDO with a copy of my child's exemption form.

MEDICAL RELEASE STATEMENT

In the event of an emergency, I give consent to any licensed physician to examine, treat, and perform any essential, emergency, and/or surgical procedures, determined to be necessary on my child. I also give my consent to Higher Trails Church, Celeste, Texas to allow my child to participate in classroom and outdoor activities. I release Higher Trails Church from legal or financial responsibility, which might result from accidental harm or injury to my child while under the care and supervision of Higher Trails Church Parent's Day Out staff.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Listed below is additional information about my child and their physician:

Name of Physician: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____

Name of Hospital: _____ Phone #: _____

Comments: _____

Allergies*: _____

***ALL FOOD ALLERGIES REQUIRE A FOOD ALLERGY TREATMENT PLAN WITH DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE PRIOR TO ADMISSION.**

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

The following people are authorized for my child _____ to be released to or called in the event of an emergency when parents/guardians cannot be reached.

CONTACT 1

Name: _____ Phone # 1: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone # 2: _____

Address: _____

CONTACT 2

Name: _____ Phone # 1: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone # 2: _____

Address: _____

CONTACT 3

Name: _____ Phone # 1: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone # 2: _____

Address: _____

FINANCIAL CONTRACT

The tuition for both programs is \$160/month per child. If more than one child in a family is enrolled, tuition will be reduced to \$150/month for other siblings. The registration fee is \$100 per school year, per child (\$250 family max) and is non-refundable.

Initial **REGISTRATION FEES:** Fees are due at the time of registration and are non-refundable. If registering after the start of the program and before March 2025, a full registration fee is still required. If registering after March 1st, the registration fee will be \$50.

Initial **POST-START DATE ENROLLMENT:** Tuition begins immediately and is prorated according to the start date.

Initial **HOLIDAYS/CLOSURES/ABSENTEEISM:** I understand that monthly tuition remains the same every month and is not discounted for holidays/PDO closures or for days that my child is sick or otherwise absent from class.

Initial **LATE TUITION CHARGE:** A late charge in the amount of \$25 will be assessed for payments received after the 7th day of the month.

Initial **WITHDRAWAL POLICY:** I understand that two week notification is required. If I find it necessary to remove my child from the program. Any unused tuition will not be refunded.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____



Communication Information

Higher Trails Church

5544 FM 903

Celeste, Texas 75423

Office Phone: (430) 336-1029

- Please save this number to your contacts so it doesn't pop up as spam in case of an emergency.

Email: pdo@highertrails.church

Kaylee Barksdale

PDO Director/Administrator

Nichole Miller

PDO Co-Director / Pre-K Teacher

Angela Gowens

2's & 3's Teacher