



ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN

Children's Place



# Parent Handbook 2025

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## HISTORY

Since 1970, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church has offered weekday programs for young children. In 1996, the Day School and Mothers' Day Out programs were combined to create St. Andrew's Presbyterian Children's Place. The Children's Place is an integral part of the children's ministries of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

## MISSION & VISION

Our mission statement:

At St. Andrew's Children's Place, our mission is to provide a Christ-centered environment that will inspire children's spiritual, educational, physical, social, and emotional growth.

We are a loving school community that openly expresses Christian values. Because Christ acted and spoke on behalf of children, we, as Christ's followers, are committed to make Christ known through love, guidance, educational, nurturing and protection given to children in order that they may have a more abundant life. Our vision is as follows:

1. To provide a Christian environment of excellence wherein children will be stimulated for maximum development and growth spiritually, intellectually, creatively, emotionally, physically and socially.
2. To provide a Christ-centered school with high standards of excellence for both teachers and students.
3. To provide a stimulating atmosphere for active learning and problem solving through modern teaching techniques and teacher-child relationships.
4. To endeavor to meet the individual needs of each child and their family, being aware of interests, abilities and developmental differences.

## LICENSING

St. Andrew's Children's Place is licensed through the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. The school adheres to Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards. A copy of these standards is available in each classroom and at the receptionist desk. You can also read these standards online at [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/)

Annually or occasionally more frequently, a licensing representative will visit the school. The most recent Licensing inspection report will be posted on the Parent Bulletin Board in the Lobby. Below are contact numbers for the Texas Department of Family Protective and Regulatory Services and for the PRS Child Abuse Hotline.

**Local Licensing Office: 713-940-5200**

**Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)**

**PRS Website: [www.dfps.state.tx.us/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/)**

## CURRICULUM

We provide a developmentally appropriate, child-centered curriculum. Our dedicated and skilled teachers communicate God's love and Christian concepts throughout their daily activities. They captivate your child's imagination and provide experiences and choices directed towards maximum growth of the whole child. Our curriculum is created in-house and is based on the children's interests and emerging skills with influences from *The Creative Curriculum* and *Conscious Discipline*. In our commitment to fostering a holistic educational experience, we have integrated the Think Orange Curriculum across all age levels to impart a thorough understanding of Jesus and the Bible, enriching our spiritual teachings with engaging, age-appropriate content. For our oldest learners, specifically in the Three and Four-year-old classrooms, we employ the Handwriting Without Tears Curriculum. This play-based approach effectively introduces foundational concepts

such as colors, shapes, numbers, and letters through sensory activities and manipulatives, making learning both enjoyable and impactful. Additionally, our PreK classroom (Hummingbird class) benefits from a partnership with a literacy specialist from the Neuhaus Center, who utilizes the Reading Readiness program to ensure that each child is well-prepared for the transition to Kindergarten. This comprehensive approach combines spiritual, cognitive, and developmental strategies to support and nurture every child's growth.

Each classroom is a unique learning environment composed of areas for the exploration of art, science and math, dramatic play, manipulatives, sensory experiences, writing and language skills, block building, books and literacy and more. Children move freely amongst the learning centers and enjoy group activities that are appropriate to their ages and development. Outdoor play or activities in our Family Center are an integral part of every day. Curriculum objectives for each age level can be found on our school website.

### **Day School Program**

Classes are held mid-August through May, 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., with options of 2, 3, or 5 days a week. Summer sessions are available.

### **Extended Day Program**

The Extended Day program serves the unique needs of families requiring full-day childcare from June to May.

### **School Year**

Our school year is held year-round from June through May. Classes for extended day students are held from 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and day school students from 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. All children “move up” to their new classrooms at the beginning of June and remain in their classrooms for the duration of the year until the end of May. Extended day is closed for major holidays, teacher in-service days (including one full week for teacher training at the beginning of June). An annual school calendar is sent out each year and is also always available at the front office.

### **Summer Program**

Summer sessions are available for our day school students with varying curriculum themes encompassing art, music, science, literature, crafts, vacation bible school and special events. Teachers provide loving, responsive care, allowing children the opportunity to exercise their newfound abilities, explore a variety of sensations through hands-on activities, music and movements and begin to interact with their peers.

## **CLASS GROUPINGS**

The following groupings are general guidelines and may be determined by enrollment.

### **INFANTS** (*Daisies, Sweet Peas, Bluebonnets, Poppies, and Buttercups*)

**10 Students/3-4 Teachers**

**2 months - 11 months by September 1**

*3/4:1 child/staff ratio*

In our infant program, infants are placed in a room with experienced staff who are dedicated to infant care through a parent-caregiver partnership. Infants participate in music class with our SOFA (School of Fine Arts) teachers using a mommy and me style of learning. Teachers engage with infants using singing, story-telling, books, and pictures. Infants also work on increasing language through eye contact, baby sign language, and gestures and pointing.

### **EARLY TODDLERS** (*Tadpoles and Guppies*)

**12 Students/ 3 Teachers**

**12 – 17 months by September 1**

*4/5:1 child/staff ratio*

### **LATE TODDLERS** (*Ducklings and Turtles*)

**18 – 23 months by September 1**

**12 Students/ 2 Teachers**

*9:1 child/staff ratio*

In the toddler group, children are assigned to a primary caregiver to provide security as they begin learning how to use social skills and deal with emotions. Continued attention is given to their rapidly growing physical and cognitive abilities and children are challenged through hands-on activities, music and movement, and center-based choices and activities.

### **TWOS** (*Dragonflies, Honey Bees, and Ladybugs*)

**2 years old by September 1**

**14-16 Students 2 Teachers**

*11:1 child/staff ratio*

As children begin to experience their blossoming independence, they are given many opportunities to make choices, implement their own ideas, express their energy and gain experience in language usage.

### **THREES** (*Kangaroos and Koalas*)

**3 years old by September 1**

**18 Students 2 Teachers**

*11:1 child/staff ratio*

Children are given the opportunity to practice self-help skills, social problem solving using language, and exercise their natural curiosity while developing fine and gross motor skills. Children must be toilet trained by the beginning of the fall semester.

### **PRE-K** (*Hummingbirds*)

**4 years old by September 1**

**20 Students 2 Teachers**

*15:1 child/staff ratio*

Children are presented with information in a meaningful context and continue to develop social skills using observation, interaction and problem solving, as well as emergent reader skills. Children's Place adheres to the September 1 cutoff date for age level assignment in accordance with area school requirements for entering Kindergarten. The school will consider requests to place a child in the age level below a child's birth year when a child requires additional time to develop in a specific developmental domain, i.e. social, speech, motor skills, etc. However, the school will not accommodate requests to place a child in the age level above a child's birth year. All pre-K students are assessed at the beginning of the year (BOY) and the end of the year (EOY) by a literacy specialist to check for Kinder readiness.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS**

### **Music with SOFA**

Children's Place partners with the St. Andrew's School of Fine Arts (SOFA) to provide exceptional teaching in the arts. All children participate in music at least one day per week. The SOFA music teachers focus on rhythm and motor skills as well as vocal skills, language development and creativity at age appropriate levels. Our music program is offered to children from ages Infants to Pre-K. Children in the Extended Day Program (Threes and Pre-K) participate in Spanish, one day per week during the afternoon.

### **Art and Motor Skills**

We offer a dedicated motor skills classroom for our three and four-year-old learners, designed to foster essential gross motor development, coordination, and social skills such as taking turns and learning to handle losing. This class will provide engaging activities tailored to enhance these skills through interactive play and structured exercises. Additionally, Ms. Isis, our curriculum coordinator, implements an art ancillary class for our two, three, and four-year-old students twice a month. This art class features a variety of creative experiences including process art, sensory art, and multimedia projects, allowing children to explore their creativity and express themselves through diverse artistic mediums.

### **Chapel: Time In God's House**

Wednesday mornings the children in our threes and pre-K classrooms experience chapel in our sanctuary. We want every child to know they are loved by God and they have purpose and value in His kingdom. We use curriculum from Think Orange and Godly Play to share stories from the bible with the children. Parents are welcome to join us on the *last Wednesday of each month* for **Family Chapel**.

### **Extra Curricular Activities**

Enrollment in additional, optional activities, such as, Gymnastics, The School of Fine Arts music classes for piano or violin, Dancing or Soccer Shots will be available to children 2 and older. The extra curricular classes are offered by outside organizations, but held on our premises. Other programs may also be available during the school year. The school will send home information pertaining to these extra curricular activities; however, registration, enrollment and fees are handled directly through the individual organizations.

## **ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION**

Admission shall be open to any child without discrimination with regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religious belief, political belief or capabilities. Priority registration for St. Andrew's Church members and current enrollments is held by the third week of February each year. All current enrollments must be in good financial standing with the Children's Place in order to obtain priority registration. ALL children must renew their enrollment if they plan to attend St. Andrew's Children's Place during the summer program or the following school year. If it is determined that an opening is available for your child, the registration fee must be paid to reserve that space. Please note that this fee is non-refundable. If there is not a space available we will place your child on a waiting list and notify you as soon as there is an opening.

\* In order to apply to St. Andrews or be placed on the waiting list, all families must first attend a tour. Tours are generally held on Tuesdays at 10:00.

To confirm your child's enrollment, the following items must be completed and returned to us, accompanied by the registration fee (if not already paid), any required supply fee, a deposit of one month's tuition for school year enrollments or the total summer tuition for summer enrollments:

- Registration and Enrollment Forms
- Medical Information And Emergency Authorization Form
- Introduce Us Form
- Immunization Records AND Physician Statement

**Please Note: All Fees paid are non-refundable.**

## **TUITION AND FEES**

Tuition is an annual total that is divided into monthly payments from August to May for our Day School students or 12 monthly payments for Extended Day enrollments, therefore the amount remains the same regardless of the number of days within the month or school closings. School closings include severe weather, government mandated lockdown, or other conditions outside of the school's control.

Tuition payments are due on the seventh of each month and debited through Brightwheel. Families that have been active members of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church for more than 1 year and are in good standing receive a discount of 10% each month. Receipts will be issued upon request.

**In order to apply your deposit** to your child's last month or months with us, at least 60 days written notice is required prior to withdrawal, as well as one full year of attendance; otherwise, your deposit and any portion there of will be forfeited. It is the responsibility of the parent to know how much deposit is following the child throughout their time with us. If you need a statement, please contact the office. **Please Note: The first month's tuition (September) and all summer tuition is non-refundable.** Please refer to the "Changes in Enrollment or Withdrawal" section of this handbook for specific policies and procedures regarding withdrawal. Tuition will also not be prorated or adjusted for students starting mid month.

### **Late Payment Fee**

A late payment fee of **\$50** will be charged, regardless of holidays or other school closings, for any monthly tuition payment not received by the 7th of each month.

### **EFT Return Fees**

A charge of **\$35** will be assessed for any EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) returned for any reason.

**Late Pickup Fee**

Day school pick-up Time is at 2:30 (School Day) or 6:00 (Extended Day). Due to parking lot congestion, a grace period of 10 minutes is allotted at 2:30. Any child that has not been picked up by 2:40 (School Day) or 6:00 (Extended Day) will be brought to the front office and the parent will be called. The clock in the front office is used to determine lateness. A late pick-up fee of **\$35** will be assessed for any child picked up between 2:41 and 2:50 for day school or between 6:01 and 6:05 for extended day. An additional **\$2 per minute** will be charged beginning at 2:51 for day school and 6:06 for extended day students. Upon the third late pick-up instance, the fee will double for each 10 minutes or portion thereof. Continued late pick-up may result in dismissal from St. Andrew’s Children’s Place. Late pick-up is often very stressful for children and makes classroom clean-up and next day preparation very difficult for teachers. We appreciate your attention to pick-up times.

**Supply Fee**

Upon initial enrollment, parents will be charged a supply fee. The supply fee will be debited twice a year annually. Half of the supply fee will be debited on September 1st and the second half the supply fee will be debited on February 1st. As part of your initial enrollment you will also receive a St. Andrew’s tote bag and nap mat (for children 1-year-old and over).

**Annual Day School Supply Fees**

Infants/Toddlers	\$200
Twos	\$200
Threes	\$375
Pre-K	\$375

**Annual Extended School Supply Fee**

All students	\$450
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**ABSENCES AND TARDIES**

We must be prepared daily for each enrolled child, whether or not he or she attends, with appropriate staff-child ratios and adequate materials. Therefore, we are unable to provide any decrease in tuition, credit, or make-up days due to a child’s absence. This includes, but is not limited to, absences due to illness, vacations, holidays, and emergency closings. If your child is going to be absent, we ask that you call and notify the front office. If your child is absent without notification and without school contact for 2 weeks, your child will be dropped from enrollment regardless of any payments made.

In order to make sure that no important learning moments are missed, and as not to cause disruptions to the class, **we highly recommend your child is in his or her classroom by 9:45.** Continuous tardies can be a detriment to children attempting to transition and getting used to a routine. Please assist your child and your child’s teacher by being on time.

[If you must bring your child to school after 10:00, please notify the office in advance](#) so that we can ensure proper staffing for your child. If no notification is given of a late arrival, there is a possibility that your child will not be admitted for the day. Children will not be admitted between the hours of 12:30 and 2:30 as these are generally rest time hours. If you need to take your child to a doctor’s appointment and return for the remainder of the day, you are asked to return either before these hours or after these hours in order to ensure the other children are not disturbed during rest time.

**Refund Policy**

Our budget, staff and purchase of supplies are determined by expected enrollment and payment of required fees. **Please understand that fees, deposits and tuition paid are non-refundable under any circumstances.**

**Changes in Enrollment or Withdrawal**

Any changes in enrollment must be submitted in writing and approved by the Director. You will be responsible for any fees incurred due to failure to notify us of changes in writing. Enrollment Change Forms are available at the front desk. Excessive requests for changes may result in an Enrollment Change fee being charged to cover processing such requests. Please be aware that it is not always possible to switch between Extended Day and School Day, because there are a specific number of Extended Day and School Day spots. Changes between Extended Day and School Day can only be accommodated if there are openings available.

A 60 days written notice is mandatory if you decide to partially or completely withdraw your child from enrollment in any of our programs. Your deposit will be applied to your child's last full month of tuition provided you have given us 60 days' notice at the beginning of the month prior to withdrawal and your child has attended for at least a full year; otherwise, your deposit and any portion thereof will be forfeited.

***The School Board reserves the right to require the withdrawal of any child who fails to demonstrate appropriate adjustments to the programs of the school, or whose parents fail to comply with the policies of the school.***

### **Changes in Enrollment Policies or Other School Policies**

Parents will be notified in writing of changes in enrollment policies or any other school policies that affect their child. The school will strive to provide parents with advance notice whenever possible.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

### **Transportation Safety and Building Security**

Please be mindful while driving in the parking lot that many hard-to-see children may be entering and exiting vehicles. Please hold your child's hand while walking to and from the building and watch carefully for vehicles that may be unable to see you and your child. Do not leave children in the car unattended.

Entering and exiting the building must only take place at the front entrance. All other doors are for emergency exit only. This is to prohibit any unknown person from entering the building without passing by the front desk. Please help us maintain security for children and staff by entering and exiting through the front entrance of the school.

At drop off, parents may either park and walk their child to the front door, or drive through the porte-cochere. Either at the front door or in the drive through, a staff member will take your child from you and escort your child to his or her classroom. At this time, parents will also use the QR code to sign the child in with the Brightwheel app. Parents of new students may walk their child in for the first three days. Following these initial days, parents will follow protocol and deliver their child to a staff member at the front door or through the drive through.

**Your child/children must remain with you both in the parking lot and while escorting them through the building. Children should not be running in the building at any time.**

**THE PORTE-COCHERES DRIVE THROUGH IS NOT A PARKING PLACE.**

Parents may pull up **at morning drop off** temporarily while waiting for their child to be taken by a staff member. Parents may not park here for afternoon pickup. Parents may not park here, exit their vehicle and leave other children unattended.

**ONLY PERSONS WITH A VALID HANDICAP STICKER MAY PARK IN THE DESIGNATED HANDICAP PARKING SPACES.**

Please do NOT use the drive-through in the afternoon for pick up. Parents must park and come in to retrieve their children in the afternoons.

The West University police will be notified and you may be ticketed and/or towed for violating this policy. Security footage of our parking lot is monitored.

### **Security of Your Personal Property**

Please do not leave your personal belongings in your car when coming into the building. Fortunately, we have reduced the number of parking lot thefts through education; however these are crimes of opportunity. Even if you are only going to be in the building for a minute, never leave your purse or other valuables in the car. Please be aware that even if you lock your doors or utilize a car alarm, within seconds a window can be broken and a purse stolen.

### **Signing In and Out**

For your child's safety and per licensing regulations, parents are required to sign their child in and out each day. Parents and guardians will conduct check ins for their child via our app, Brightwheel. It is highly important for the safety of your child

that we have an accurate count of children in attendance during the day, therefore parents are required to have this app in order to sign children in and out of classrooms.

### **Arrival and Departure Times**

Children enrolled in Extended Day may enter the school building starting at 7:00am. School Day children may enter at 9:00am. Please be aware that drop-off and pick-up times are not ideal to engage in long conversations regarding your child. We would be happy to arrange a conference or phone call to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have. Departure time is 2:30 p.m. for Day School enrollees and no later than 6:00 p.m. for children attending Extended Day. Please depart with your child on time so that our teachers may tidy the room and prepare for the next day and so that you can avoid any late charges. Please note that at the 2:30 dismissal, Extended Day children are often still sleeping and we need to maintain a quiet space for them to finish their rest time, therefore if you and your child want to socialize with other families we encourage you to gather on the woods playground. Over the past several years we have had a very active group of families who have enjoyed this special time after school each day. We ask that you not use the front playground after 2:30 p.m. as it is often set up for afternoon use by our Extended Day students.

### **Separation and End-of-Day Considerations**

After escorting your child to the front door for drop-off, offer a quick hug and kiss, a few positive words of encouragement and a firm good-bye. Your consistency and confidence at separation is most important in your child's positive transition to school. Your child's teacher and the Director are available to assist you with any separation concerns.

At departure time, your child may wish to briefly show you his or her special art project or activity. Although the teacher will wish to bid you all good-bye, please refrain from long conversations, as his or her attention must be focused on all of the children. Be sure the teacher knows you are taking your child, gather his or her belongings and remember to sign out. Keep your child near you as you leave the building, reminding him or her that this is not the time for "run-and-hide" type games. In the interest of safety, children are not permitted to roam the halls unattended or linger and play in classrooms once they have been picked up by a parent or guardian. In addition, other siblings are not permitted to enter the classroom at pick up time in order to maintain the safety and cleanliness of the classroom for the remaining students.

### **Pick-up By Other Than Parent**

No child will be released to someone other than a parent without written consent. If someone other than a parent or person identified on the Registration and Introduce Us Forms will be picking up your child, you must add this person as a contact to your child's profile on Brightwheel. Anyone unfamiliar to the staff will be required to provide identification.

We strongly recommend that you provide a code word on the Enrollment Form as a means of identifying yourself in the event you need to give an emergency pick-up authorization via telephone. The staff person answering the phone may not know or recognize your voice and cannot release your child without proper authorization.

Your code can be anything you know and will remember. It is NOT to be shared with others and is only used to identify you, the parent.

## **WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL**

**PLEASE CLEARLY LABEL EVERYTHING WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME!**

### **Breakfast**

Children enrolled in Extended Day and arriving prior to 8:15 a.m. may bring a prepared breakfast in disposable containers. Teachers are unable to heat food. Anyone arriving after 8:15 a.m. should have breakfast at home.

### **Lunch**

Lunches are to be sent with children on a daily basis. Because we do not have accommodations to refrigerate or heat lunches, all food must be stored appropriately using an ice pack or thermos if necessary.

Foods packed in containers that your child can easily open and close and prepared in a manner that the child can easily feed him or herself will encourage independence and help eliminate waiting during the busy lunchtime.

Plastic utensils, napkins, plates, or bowls should be sent if needed. Teachers will sit with the children during meals and snacks and will encourage them to eat, modeling good table manners. Any food not consumed will be returned to help you monitor your child's eating habits. We encourage nutritious and wholesome foods, avoiding excess salt, fat and sugar.

We also offer an optional catered hot lunch provided by Lunch Direct. Each family that would like to participate in this service will log into the Lunch Direct website to create an account to order their child's food. More information is available at the front desk.

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, our state licensing agency, requires that children be offered ½ of their daily food needs while in our care. According to this requirement, your child's daily lunch must contain at least the following:

- 1 serving each of milk or cheese
- meat, egg, peanut butter, beans or cheese
- vegetable or fruit or fruit juice bread, cereal, rice or noodles

### **Lunch Ideas**

- cooked pasta
- meat & cheese cubes or slices
- bagels, rice cakes, bread, breadsticks, muffins, crackers with cheese, peanut butter, jelly, cream cheese, apple butter.
- tuna plain, with pasta or sandwich
- egg salad or hard boiled egg (peeled)
- pancakes or waffles
- chicken nuggets
- Pizza
- dry cereal
- jello
- Pudding
- yogurt
- fresh or canned fruit (cubed, sliced, peeled)
- cottage cheese
- vegetables (partially cooked or raw)

For children who order Lunch Direct, staff will cut food into pieces no larger than ¼ inch square for infants and ½ inch square for toddlers/twos, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability. **All food sent from home should already be cut into safe and consumable pieces.**

### **Snacks**

Parents are asked to provide the snack for their own children throughout the year. Parents should label the food they want their child to eat for snack as "SNACK". Extended day parents need to send 2 snacks, one for the morning and the other for afternoon. Only water will be served with snack in order to provide proper hydration and model healthful choices that will eventually build good lifelong habits. Staff is not available to do extensive preparation of the snacks provided so please send them already prepared in a manner that the children can easily feed themselves.

### **Ideas for Nutritious Snacks**

fresh fruits	yogurt	fresh vegetables	dips
salads	celery	raisins	cream cheese
frozen fruit/yogurt	trail mix	crackers	cheese
tortillas	dry cereal	finger sandwiches	muffins
bread or bagels	fruit cookies	tuna or chicken salad	

Recommended Snack from USDA Food and Nutrition Service taken from [www.nal.usda.gov/childcare](http://www.nal.usda.gov/childcare)

CANDY/TREAT: Candy sent for lunch is not permitted. These will be sent home for the child to enjoy at home. Please ask in advance if you wish to send a treat for the class.

## REST TIME

According to the State of Texas Licensing Standards, all children are required to participate in rest time after lunch each day. Those children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes of quiet time will be allowed to participate in other quiet activities. Upon initial enrollment, parents are required to purchase a mat from the front office for their children to rest upon. Children should bring a crib-sized sheet (these fit our rest mats) and a small blanket. These items must be small enough to fit inside the child's St. Andrew's tote bag. Your child's original mat will be used throughout their enrollment unless it is damaged. Parents will be required to pay an additional mat fee if their child's mat must be replaced.

- Older children who do not sleep at rest time will be required to lay for a period of time on their mats while teachers help to get other children to sleep who still need rest. Following 15-20 minutes of "body rest" any children who are still awake will be given a quiet activity to do on their rest mats. Parents may send quiet activities for children to do, however iPads or tablets of any kind will not be permitted.

## Security Items

If your child has a special security item, such as a special blanket or stuffed toy, we encourage you to bring it. Security items often help children during separation. Please be sure it is clearly labeled and will fit in the child's St. Andrew's tote bag.

## CLOTHING

In addition to being comfortable and appropriate for the weather, school clothing should be easy for the child to manage and completely washable. Smocks are available for children to wear during "messy" projects, but smocks cannot completely protect clothing. Please send your child in play clothes appropriate for active play both indoors and outdoors and rubber-soled, **closed toe shoes**. Boots, Crocs or flip-flop thongs may NOT be worn to school. These types of shoes are dangerous during active play on the playground.

Elastic waist pants or shorts make using the restroom an independent activity and certainly makes life easier for those busy children who wait until the last minute!

A complete change of clothing, including underwear and socks should be kept in the child's bag and sent to school daily. **Please check your child's bag periodically to ensure extra clothes are weather appropriate and the correct size.**

## SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT

It is recommended that children wear sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, repellents containing DEET should be used. Teachers are **unable to apply sunscreen or insect repellent for our Day School children**. Please apply these products if needed, before your child arrives at school each day, not in the hallways. With special permission, **Extended Day families may provide sunscreen and/or insect repellent for their child's use in the afternoons**. A special permission slip must be filled out to authorize use of these products. Repellents and sunscreen may not be stored in your child's tote bag or cubby.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INFANTS AND YOUNG TODDLERS

Infants and young toddlers who are not ready for table food must be provided a diet of formula, breast milk and/or baby food approved in writing, signed and dated by the child's physician or parent, and updated as changes are made. This information is kept on the Introduce Us Form in your child's class. Plastic bottles must be used and these as well as all food containers must be clearly labeled with your child's name. Refrigerators are available in the classrooms for storage of bottles and food. Baby food will be served at room temperature from unopened jars and bottles will be heated in warm water rather than microwaves.

Two changes of clothing, a small blanket, crib sheet and diapers are to be sent with your child daily. Once your child moves from a crib to a rest mat, he or she will also need a crib-sized sheet. These belongings must all fit within the St. Andrew's tote bag. ALL items, including the tote bag, need to be clearly labeled with the child's name. Each family is asked to provide packages of wipes periodically as they are needed.

In order to reduce the risk of SIDS, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under 1 year of age be put to sleep on their backs. We will follow this recommendation for all infants.

## WHAT NOT TO BRING

### Toys

We are fortunate to have a wonderful collection of appropriate toys for young children. Personal toys, especially guns, war toys and other toys that promote aggressive play should be left at home. Please ensure your child that his toys are for home use and that at school there are special toys and activities. Occasionally teachers may plan “show and tell” days when special items may be brought from home. Lost or broken belongings cause much sadness – please label all items clearly.

### Candy

Please do not send candy, gum or carbonated beverages to school for lunch or snacks.

### Clothing

Shirts, coats, and jackets **with strings, cords or straps that hang from** them can cause serious injury on the playground and should not be worn to school. Socks and tennis shoes are recommended for outdoor play

### Jewelry

Please do not let children wear jewelry to school. It may snag on equipment and cause cutting or choking.

## DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

The purpose of discipline and guidance for young children is to enhance the development of self-control, decision-making ability and self-esteem. Modeling, redirection, time away, thinking time, and verbal guidance are used to help children learn appropriate behaviors. NO corporal punishment, humiliation or punishment associated with food, naps or toileting will be used.

There are three main components to decisions regarding discipline:

1. The child may not harm himself or herself.
2. The child may not harm other children or adults.
3. The child may not destroy or misuse materials.

For the older infant or toddler, gentle but firm reminders of appropriate behavior and a distraction to another activity are generally the preferred and most successful methods of discipline.

### Biting

**If your child bites another child and leaves a visible mark more than twice in one day, you will be required to come and pick up your child for the remainder of the day.**

For all children, teachers make every effort to state limits in the positive rather than the negative and natural consequences (those relating to the behavior) are used as much as possible. When difficulties occur, it is important for all adults to realize that testing limits is another learning process for young children.

If any child has persistent difficulty with aggressive or destructive behaviors, including but not limited to biting, the classroom teacher and or parents may request assistance from the Director to determine and implement a specific plan of action to improve behavior. In some cases the school may require that families seek assistance from professionals outside the school. Teachers, families, and other professionals will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success. However, the safety of all children is our ultimate responsibility. If a child threatens the safety of other children, the child will be removed from the room and in the event of a serious incident or repeated instances; the parent will be required to pick up the child. Continual repetition of incidents and harmful or destructive behavior may result in dismissal from St. Andrew’s Children’s Place.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

At St. Andrew's Children's Place, our toilet training policy emphasizes a collaborative approach between home and school. Most children begin toilet training around the age of two, but readiness can vary significantly among individuals. Teachers will communicate with parents when they feel a child is ready to start this process, which should ideally begin at home. Once children demonstrate success in their home environment, teachers will reinforce this training at school using similar methods.

We understand that some children may take longer to adjust to the school setting, and if a child experiences more than three accidents in a day, they will be placed in a pull-up for health and hygiene reasons. Parents need not worry if their child wears underwear at home but a pull-up at school; research indicates that children can compartmentalize these experiences effectively.

Our teachers are committed to supporting each child's readiness and progress in toileting, ensuring a smooth transition and maintaining a healthy environment for all students.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION**

### **Classroom Visits and Parent Orientation**

Classroom Visits and Parent Orientation occur in June and again in late August, during the week before school starts. The Classroom Visit is a time for parents and children to visit their new classroom and meet their teachers. Parent Orientation is designed to acquaint parents with policies of the school, and to provide an overview of up-coming events for the year. The orientation also provides an opportunity for parents to ask questions, meet their child's teacher, and learn about classroom curriculum and procedures.

### **Annual Events and Celebrations**

Families are invited to attend our various special events and annual programs. Classroom teachers organize parties throughout the year to celebrate holidays and special occasions. Parents are invited to participate through attendance and by volunteering to provide fun snacks for the class.

### **Parent Auxiliary Group**

Parents are encouraged to join our Parent Auxiliary Group which provides opportunities for involvement in special projects throughout the year. Information about various volunteer opportunities will be available at Parent Orientation or they may speak to their child's teacher or the administrative staff.

### **On-going Communication**

Open, two-way communication between teachers and parents is a vital part of quality early childhood care and education. Parents are the experts on their child, providing important information and insight. Teachers can inform parents about child development and curriculum and give information about how their particular child learns in a group setting. We offer many opportunities for parents and teachers to share with one another. Use of the Brightwheel App is our primary form of communication.

### **Daily/Weekly Communication**

Information is often shared orally at drop off and pick up, but please feel free to email teachers with any questions or concerns. Parents of younger children are encouraged to provide their primary caregiver with their child's most recent eating, sleeping and diapering information. At departure time, caregivers will provide this same information to parents about their child's day. We strive to provide parents of children one and younger with oral and/or written communication on a daily basis. Parents of children in the twos, three's or Pre-kindergarten program will receive oral and/or written communication on a minimum of once a week.

- **Visits:**

Parents are always welcome in their child's classroom for a visit or to join their child for lunch. Be aware that particularly for toddlers and children new to out of home care, a visit can be confusing and demands yet another separation adjustment from them. Please discuss your child's anticipated reaction with his or her teacher prior to visiting.

- **Conferences:**

Although teachers are often unable to have extensive conversations at the beginning and end of the day, parents are encouraged to request a phone call or personal conference at any time during the year. Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year in October and May.

- **Monthly Calendars and Class Newsletters:**

Teachers communicate information about curriculum themes and activity plans to parents via the Brightwheel App. Weekly classroom newsletters are sent through the Brightwheel app from each child's teacher. Teachers may opt to use email for parent communication.

- **Bulletin Boards:**

Please look for artwork, special projects and notices displayed on bulletin boards in and outside of the classrooms as well as in the front entryway.

- **Memos:**

Please check the front pocket of your child's St. Andrew's tote bag daily for memos that contain information about school wide concerns.

- **Special Information from Home:**

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing us as soon as possible. It is not uncommon for changes in a child's life to affect behavior, security and general well being. By knowing, we can provide the extra understanding he or she may need. Common causes of distress include either or both parents being away from home for any reason for an extended time, new person living in the home, illness of either parent or a sibling, any hospitalization, accident or death in the family, a new caretaker or any new employee, moving, or the death of a pet. All information will be regarded as confidential.

- **Parent Grievance Procedures:**

In our day-to-day communication with parents we strive to resolve issues as they come up. However, from time to time a parent may feel that an issue has not been satisfactorily addressed or resolved, and may wish to pursue the matter further. It is essential that parents are heard when they raise a grievance. All parent grievances should be addressed initially at the level closest to the event in an effort to achieve a resolution. The early identification of a grievance and the prompt initiation of a resolution can help avert further problems. The levels through which a grievance resolution should proceed are:

1. **The Lead Teacher**
2. **The Director**
3. **The Director of Ministries**

## **ASSESSMENTS**

Assessment is the process of gathering information about children in order to make decisions. We use information gathered through assessment to support learning through curriculum and lesson planning. We use assessment to identify special needs in order to modify curriculum, communicate with parents and provide referrals to professionals. Assessment also helps us examine our program as a whole in order to monitor trends and evaluate program effectiveness. Finally, assessment is used to demonstrate accountability to our accrediting organization, AdvancEd.

At St. Andrew's, assessment occurs through a variety of methods. Teachers continually observe the children within their care and maintain a written record of their observations. Results of assessments are considered confidential. This information will be kept in a secure manner and will not be released without written permission of the parents. If you have any questions or would like to view the materials used at St. Andrew's for assessment, please contact the Director.

### **Conditions under which children will be assessed**

We believe in authentic assessment. Assessment must occur in a meaningful context (during play) with a familiar adult (child's teacher).

A variety of methods must be used with many samples collected over a period of time.

### **Observations/Anecdotal Records/Written Communication**

Teachers observe children daily and write anecdotal records once per week. Written anecdotal records are written on the anecdotal record form and kept in a binder by class.

Written and/or verbal communication based upon observations or anecdotal records occur daily for children ages two and younger. For children age three and older, written and/or verbal communication based upon observations or anecdotal records occur at least once each week. Written information will be sent home in the child's tote bag.

### **Student Portfolios**

Each child has a portfolio containing work samples. Teachers strive to collect at least one item for the portfolio each month. Portfolios are used to show progress and growth over time. These items are shared at the parent teacher conference in the spring.

### **Assessments**

Formal and informal assessments will be conducted throughout the school year. All formal, informal, and teacher made assessments are kept for the year in your child's assessment portfolio.

### **St. Andrew's Developmental Continuum**

Using this instrument, each child is assessed twice in the year, examining progress within the four major developmental domains: Social/Emotional, Language, Cognitive and Physical. This information is shared with parents during conferences and summarized in written format within the Spring Conference Report. These results are also used for individual and group planning curriculum and lesson planning.

### **Speech and Language Screenings**

Speech and Language screenings will be offered to all two, three, and four year olds at St. Andrew's beginning in October. The purpose of these screenings is to determine if further speech-language testing is necessary. While vision and hearing screenings are state mandated, speech and language screenings are not. It has been estimated that up to 10% of the general population in Texas has some type of communication disorder. For children, communication disorders can affect social interactions, school performance, self-esteem and self-image. The earlier intervention is received, the greater the progress for most children. Language comprehension, language expression, articulation, fluency and voice are areas examined within the screening which is conducted by a licensed speech pathologist. Parents may choose to have their child receive this screening.

### **Developmental Concerns**

Parents may initiate a referral to determine the need for Early Intervention Services. A child who has a developmental delay of at least 25% which affects functioning in one or more areas of development, including cognition, communication, gross or fine motor, social-emotional and adaptive/self-help qualifies for Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECI) administered by the Texas Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Texas Education Agency.

### **Early Intervention Services**

ECI provides evaluations, at no cost to families, to determine eligibility and the need for services. Families and professionals work together as a team to plan appropriate services based on the unique strengths and needs of the child and family. Services are provided in the home and child care facilities. Services include Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Speech-Language Therapy and other services. If you have a concern, please consult with the Director who will be happy to assist you in locating professional referrals.

**0 to 3 years of age** - Eligibility is determined by a team of at least two professionals from different disciplines. ECI determines eligibility for infants and toddlers who are birth to 36 months of age.

**Age 3 or older** - Services are available for children ages 3 through 21, through the local school district. A referral for assessment may be made by contacting the director of special education for the local school district.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of information concerning any child or family is of the utmost importance. Information should not be shared with other teachers or parents. In addition, phone numbers and addresses of children are considered confidential and cannot be shared unless written permission has been given.

Results of assessment are considered confidential. This information will be kept in a secure manner and will not be released without written permission of the parents. Only the classroom teachers, the Director will have access to assessment and screening results.

## PARENT RIGHTS

Parent Rights are based on existing policies and guidelines at the national, state, and local levels.

Parents, in their relationships with schools, have the right:

- To be included in the educational process of their children;
- To work in a mutually supportive and respectful partnership;

Parents, in order to support development for their children, have the right:

- To examine the curriculum materials of the classes;
- To expect materials and supplies that reinforce learning;
- To expect an instructional program that recognizes individual learning styles;
- To receive assistance from school personnel to further the progress and improvement of their children;
- To have access to school performance data.

Parents, in order to be knowledgeable about their children's educational experience, have the right:

- To receive information concerning the development or skills their children are expected to accomplish;
- To have access to all written record concerning their children.
  - To question anything in their children's records that they feel is inaccurate or misleading or is an invasion of privacy and to receive a response from the school;
- To receive prompt responses to inquiries;
- To be informed of their children's progress and of the appropriate school personnel that they should contact if problems arise;
- To be informed of processes to address parental concerns or available grievance procedures; and
- To confer with their child's teacher.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our program is planned for children who are in good health and can participate actively in all areas. We are unable to care for ill children. In an effort to keep illness among children at the Children's Place at a minimum, we ask that you observe your child carefully each morning for signs of illness. **Please do not bring your child when he or she is not feeling well.**

If your child develops symptoms of illness during his or her time at school, a staff member will call the parent, report the information and ask that arrangements be made to pick the child up from school within the hour. It is very important that all parents have a person designated to pick up their child in the event neither parent can be reached. Any child not picked up within the hour will incur a "late illness pick up fee" of \$35 after one hour followed by \$2 per minute until the child has been picked up. **If your child is sent home with a fever or other symptom listed below, they may not return for 48 hours unless otherwise notified.**

Following is a listing of those illnesses and symptoms that will require exclusion, including requirements for return. Some communicable illnesses can be extremely dangerous to pregnant women, and children and adults with certain conditions. It is very important that you inform us if your child is diagnosed with any communicable illness so that anyone who has been exposed can watch for symptoms or contact their health care provider, if necessary.

### **St. Andrew's Children's Place will exclude children and adults with these symptoms:**

- **Temperature:** A tympanic or forehead temperature above 100 degrees or greater must go home until fever is gone for 48 hours. Children experiencing mild temperatures the day after an immunization are exempt from this. If the elevated temperature occurs more than 24 hours after the vaccination was administered, then the exemption no longer applies.
- **Accompanying Behavior Changes:** Includes unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, diarrhea, or vomiting.
- **Uncontrolled Diarrhea:** Defined as 2 within 24 hour period OR an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern, with increased stool water and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper or toilet use – until diarrhea cleared for 48 hours.
- **Vomiting:** Two or more times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting has been determined by a physician to be caused due to a non-communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- **Mouth Sores:** With drooling unless and/or until the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is not infectious.
- **Rash:** Children must be evaluated by a health professional for any skin rashes. Children must remain at home until the rash disappears or when the child is cleared by a physician to indicate the rash is not communicable.
- **Hand Foot and Mouth Disease:** 24 hours fever free in addition to no new sores within a 24 hours period with some scabbing of original blisters to show healing has begun.
- **Purulent Conjunctivitis:** "Pink eye" defined as pink or red conjunctive with white or yellow eye discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and including a child with eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye – until after treatment has begun and redness and drainage is no longer present.
- **Infestation:** (e.g. fleas, scabies, head lice) – until 24 hours after treatment was begun. Must be rechecked in one week and retreated if necessary.
- **Impetigo:** Until 24 hours after treatment was begun. Must be rechecked in one week and retreated if necessary.
- **Streptococcal Pharyngitis and Scarlet Fever:** (strep throat) – until 48 hours after treatment has been initiated and until the child has been without fever for 48 hours.
- **Ringworm Infection:** (tinea capitis, tinea corporis, tinea cruris and tinea pedis) – until 24 hours after treatment was begun.
- **Chickenpox:** Until all skin lesions have dried and crusted, usually 6-7 days.
- **Pertussis:** (whooping cough) – until 5 days of appropriate treatment has been completed.
- **Mumps:** Until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- **Measles:** Until 4 days after the rash appears.
- **Rubella:** Until 7 days after the rash appears.
- **Covid:** According to the CDC if children are **fever free** for over 24 hours and other symptoms are improving, they may return to school.

### **Administering Medication**

Except under unusual circumstances, we do not administer medications. Parents should consult with a physician as sometimes medicine can be given in different forms (liquid, pill, capsule) and/or varying number of times per day (morning and bedtime versus three times per day). When a child is in our program for more than 6 hours per day and needs a mid-day dose of medication, it will be administered only with written authorization. Medication Forms are available at the front desk. The following policies apply:

1. Medication can only be given when:

- Permission slip is complete (per medication)
  - Medication is in a childproof container
  - Original label is on medication container
  - Name of child is on medication container
  - Date on prescription is current
2. If medication does not meet the above criteria, parents will be called and medication will not be dispensed.
  3. We will administer over the counter medications at the discretion of the director. Over the counter medication will NOT be administered to diminish the effects of contagious illnesses (i.e. fever, diarrhea, etc.). Parents may ask permission for over the counter medications by speaking with the director and filing our appropriate permission forms.
  4. Medications and completed forms must be given to an administrator in the office. Medicines may not be left with teachers or stored in diaper bags or tote bags.

### **Immunizations and Allergies**

Your child's immunizations must meet the immunization standards of the United States Public Health Service or the American Academy of Pediatrics. Parents are required to submit a new immunization form and physician's statement annually. During the school year, parents must notify the office if a child has received any additional immunizations or has developed any allergies or medical conditions that can affect him or her while at school.

### **Accident and Incident Reports:**

If a child is injured or an unusual incident occurs while at St. Andrew's Children's Place, an accident or incident report will be completed on Brightwheel. A paper copy of the report will be placed at the front desk for the parents to sign. Parents may ask for a printed copy of the report at pick up time.

### **Medical Emergencies**

If the event is life threatening, the school will first call 911, followed by the parent. If the parent is not available, emergency contacts listed on the enrollment form will be called. In all other situations the school will first call the parent followed by the emergency contacts.

### **Pesticides**

Pesticides will be periodically used in the school. All pesticides used are approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and applied by a licensed certified commercial applicator. In addition, every effort is made for application to take place during in-service days or at closing on a Friday when children are not present. Parents may check with office staff for scheduled treatment dates. In addition a notice will be posted 48 hours in advance of pesticide treatments.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Birthdays**

It is great fun for children to share their birthday celebration with their friends and teachers. If you choose to celebrate at school, please arrange in advance with your child's teacher to bring simple, easy to serve refreshments. Cake, cupcakes or cookies and ice cream may be served at snack time. Gifts and party decorations are greatly discouraged. No special guests or entertainment may be brought to the school without the Director's approval. Birthday party invitations must be distributed outside the classroom by the parent.

### **Water Activities**

Occasionally the children will participate in Splash and Sprinkle Days. Generally Splash Days occur during May and during summer sessions. Parents are given notice of these dates in advance. Water activities are closely supervised and may include a small wading pool with 1 – 1 ½ inches of water, a slip and slide, a sprinkler and other water activities in sensory tubs. Children are supervised at all times and 2 volunteers per classroom are necessary. Permission to participate in water activities is indicated by parents on the enrollment form.

### **Animals within the School**

Some rooms may have a small classroom pet, generally fish. Occasionally animals will visit the school, such as the bunny from the Nature Discovery Center. During a pet unit, teachers may invite families to bring pets from home for a brief visit. In any instance when animals will be present within the school, notice will be provided to parents.

### **School Photographs**

A professional photographer will take individual photographs in the fall and class photos in the spring. Photographs will be available for purchase.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

We have developed general operating goals, guidelines, and procedures for a list of critical events and emergencies. The staff will strive to preserve and protect life, reduce emotional trauma, assist in emotional recovery from trauma, minimize personal injury and damage to property, and cooperate with the local emergency preparedness agencies.

### **Types of Emergencies**

The types of emergencies for which these procedures will be put into place are defined as:

1. Emergencies that require an evacuation (i.e. fire, gas leak in the building, etc.)
2. Emergencies which require a shelter in place (i.e. weather related incident, intruder, active shooter, etc.)

### **Communications:**

- The Director will notify staff when an alert occurs and give the information about the type of emergency via 2-way radio.
- The West University Place Fire Department has on file a Fire-Rescue chart of our facilities for emergency situations.
- Parents of The Children's Place will be notified if necessary first through Brightwheel and then through a phone call if parents are not responsive via Brightwheel
- If an emergency occurs during preschool hours:
  - Do not drive to the school unless it is safe to do so and/or you have been notified by the preschool director to pick up your child.
  - It may be difficult to get through to the preschool via telephone because of damage to phone lines or because the preschool or church is trying to contact you via phone tree or phone call.
  - Tune to news media for emergency instructions. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Children's Place follows the Houston Independent School District's decisions on public school closings.

In times of emergency, information about the status of schools is communicated through a variety of media. The preschool requests that parents not call their child's school or the church office in times of emergency as it is important to keep phone lines free for emergency communications. Circumstances may prevent parents from picking up their children or may require that children be picked up at a location other than the preschool facility.

The safety of children and staff is our first priority. Our second priority is the reunification of parents with their children. Parents should check for information and status reports on Brightwheel or messages sent via Constant Contact titled Preschool Emergency Notifications if it is possible to send or post information.

### **Evacuation Locations**

There are two primary types of evacuations utilized by the school. One is the typical on-site evacuation where students and staff are evacuated from their classrooms to the inner part of the building away from windows and doors, or other safe locations inside the church facility. The most common on-site evacuations would be in response to a tornado warning, an act of violence, or a technological hazard.

The second type is an off-site evacuation where staff and students are moved out of the facility to other buildings or locations off of the church campus. The most common off-site evacuation is in the case of a fire where students are directed to leave the building and assemble at a designated site in "The Woods" playground (Located at 3303 Bissonnet).

After an emergency incident, and once it is deemed safe to pick up the children, parents will be directed by staff to the Parent Reunion Area either on campus or in "The Woods" playground. Students will only be released to persons who are listed on the student's enrollment form.

The Emergency Plan handbook in its entirety is available at the front desk for parent review.

## UNFORSEEN CLOSURES

St. Andrew's will always attempt to follow the calendar that has been given out at the beginning of the year. There are however instances when unforeseen closures may happen. Here are some examples of when St. Andrew's may have to close due to an emergency situation:

- **HISD EMERGENCY CLOSURE:** If HISD announces they will be closed due to weather conditions, other threatening situations, or citywide celebrations, St. Andrew's will also be closed.
- **OTHER EMERGENCY CLOSURES:** St. Andrew's Children's Place reserves the right to close the school at the discretion of the Office Staff and President of the Board should it be deemed necessary even if HISD remains open. Some emergencies that may warrant closing the school may include but are not limited to: Power outages, water outages, A/C or heat outages, facility damages that make the presence of a children a danger, extreme outbreaks of illness where a large majority of children or staff members fall ill, or the death of a staff member or child.
- **PROCEDURE:** If a closing occurs while children are at school, children will be kept safe and calm until parents arrive. Staff will be notified of a closing by the director or someone from the office via text, email, or Brightwheel as soon as it is known that the school will close. Lead teachers are in charge of contacting all parents to notify them of the closing. Any and all inclement weather situations will be evaluated with caution.

## SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Our Director, **Claire Mello**, is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and licensed in the state of Texas for Behavior Analysis. Claire graduated from Texas A&M University in 2000 with a degree in Elementary Education. She went on to receive her master's degree in Behavior Analysis from Arizona State University many years later in 2018. Claire has more than 20 years of professional experience working with children in a variety of educational settings and with a variety of ages from birth to 15. As the director, Claire supports the teachers in the classrooms with curriculum, lesson planning, behavioral concerns, and more. Claire grew up overseas and enjoys traveling.

**Minerva Rojas-Lopez** is our Assistant Director. Minerva has an Associates of Science in Child Development. She also holds a Child Care Director Credential from Shade Tree Learning. She joined the St. Andrew's family over 14 years ago and has experience in all groups. Minerva took some time off after having her daughter, but she missed us so much that she came back after sending her youngest off to Pre-K. Minerva is a mom of 3 boys, 2 college students and 1 high school freshman. She also has one daughter in middle school. Minerva's passion in education is messy fun and process art!

**Isis Pinon** is our Curriculum Coordinator and has been a dedicated member of St. Andrews since 2016. With a Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Isis brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role. Her passion for educational excellence is evident from her three years teaching Sunday School, her experience with art education for students from kindergarten through 5th grade, and her time teaching 8th grade. At St. Andrew's Children's Place, she also taught 3- and 2-year-olds, further demonstrating her versatility and commitment to early childhood education. Isis was an active youth member, which eventually led to her leading both middle school and high school youth groups, reflecting her deep dedication to nurturing and guiding students across all age groups. Her love for teaching Jesus and integrating faith into the St. Andrew's curriculum underscores her commitment to education and spiritual growth.

**Kelly Lewis** is the Director of Ministries for the entire church campus, overseeing The Children's Place, Building Blocks, and SOFA. Kelly holds a Bachelors of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management from the University of Houston. She has been a member of St. Andrew's for over 45 years and even attended nursery school here. She lives with her husband

Paul and her two girls, Emma who is a freshman at TCU and Abby, a high school sophomore. Kelly and both of her girls also attended The Children's Place for their early education years!

The school staff is administered by the head pastor, Jeff Smith, and the Director of Ministries, Kelly Lewis, to whom both report to the session of the church. These persons approve teaching appointments and present necessary issues to appropriate Committees or the Session of the church. They determine and administer the policies of the school and employ the Director. It is the Director's responsibility to carry out the policies, philosophies and goals set by the church.

Any concerns you may have regarding the policies and procedures of St. Andrew's Children's Place should first be brought to the attention of the Director, who will share them with the head pastor and the Director of Ministries.

### **St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**

Families are invited to participate in all areas of  
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Our Worship Service is at 10:00 am on Sunday.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church also has an active Music Ministry, Children's and Youth Ministry, and a variety of regularly scheduled Adult Programs. The staff and congregation of St. Andrew's welcome any opportunity to serve you and your family.

### **Vision Statement**

Encouraging each other daily to follow Jesus and love the world.

### **Identity Statement**

We are a community of broken people learning to be loved by Jesus so that we can love like Jesus.