



Parent Handbook

**3813 Wedgway Dr
Fort Worth, TX 76133
817-395-1885**

www.pebblepondpreschool.com

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Welcome to Pebble Pond Preschool

The purpose of Pebble Pond Preschool is to create an environment where children build positive habits that will have a positive impact on their health, community, and the world while stimulating early growth and development. Our program gives children ages 2 and up enriching opportunities to develop the whole child. We focus on learning through child-directed play, experiences focused on nature, and a small amount of academic time. We believe a balance of play and preschool enhances growth and development in all areas: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually.

Pebble Pond Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

Pebble Pond Preschool is a listed home by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Curriculum

Pebble Pond Preschool uses a creative learning approach as the foundation for our curriculum. Every week we focus on an edible plant and a nature concept. We incorporate these elements in our drama, art, math, free play and science activities. The children are also spoken to in Spanish throughout day and have new English and Spanish words and concepts introduced to them weekly. We believe that children learn best when they are free to explore and fully interact with their environment and each other at their pace and interest level. That is why most of the day is spent in free exploration and we use project-based learning techniques. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. Pebble Pond Preschool is a place where healthy habits for themselves, for each other, and the environment are created and nurtured, of course all while having fun. This program provides developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environments.

To learn more about this program, visit www.pebblepondpreschool.com

Administrative Policies

Hours of Operation

Pebble Pond is open from 8:00am-5:30pm, Monday-Friday, year-round. We start program promptly at 9am so please take this into consideration as children are more successful when they arrive when the activities start.

Holidays and Center Closures

HOLIDAYS: We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, MLK Jr. Day, Caesar Chavez Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day After Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Full tuition is due for holiday weeks.

NOTE: In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Pebble Pond Preschool may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule.

SICK/PERSONAL DAYS: As strong as our immune system has become over the years, we unfortunately still get sick from time to time. Because of this we allot five paid sick/personal days per year. We also use these days for our continuing education classes (CPR, Pediatric First Aid, etc) in order to keep our childcare license in good standing. We will provide as much of an advance notice as possible if such situations arise.

VACATIONS: We allot ourselves two weeks of un-paid vacation a year. The dates of our vacation will be notified at least two weeks in advance. Regular payment rates apply for your vacations (pay for child's spot), weeks with holidays, and provider's sick/personal days. Please keep in mind that we work year-round over 9.5 hours/day and that we are limited growth business, with limited income.

Note: Parents are responsible for finding back up care for their children during provider vacations, holidays, and sick/personal days resulting in the daycare closing.

Enrollment Procedures

Upon selecting Pebble Pond Preschool to meet your child's educational needs, all enrollment paperwork is required before the child can start our program. Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Admission Information
- Immunization Record
- Sunscreen & Insect Repellent Consent
- Milk Alternative Statement
- Family and Social History
- Orientation Checklist

Parents will be notified within 30 days of any policy change in writing. Signatures from parents may be required.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is paid in advance and is due on the last business day of the week for the upcoming week if paying weekly. When paying monthly, tuition is due the last business day of the month for the upcoming month. Tuition will be considered late as of the 1st business day of the following week. It will be considered "past due" and a \$5 late fee will be added each day tuition has not been paid. If Tuition has not been received by the 3rd late day (Wednesday), all services will be suspended until payment is received. Should the past due amount not be paid by the following Friday of the week Pebble Pond Preschool reserves the right to disenroll the student and the family will have to re-register should they wish to continue care. (As per the *Registration Agreement*).

We accept checks, money orders, cash, credit cards and online payments. **Please note there will be a 3% service charge added for all credit card payments.** A **non-refundable** registration fee is due at the time of enrollment.

A **non-refundable** quarterly materials fee is due at the beginning of each quarter (January, April, July, October). If a child is enrolled after the beginning of that quarter, then the materials fee is due upon enrollment. During summer months and holiday times, an activity fee may be charged. Activity fees are for additional activities outside our normal planned curriculum. Parents will be notified in advance of all activity fees. There are **no refunds** for days missed due to illness, vacations or school closings due to inclement weather.

Our program is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:30pm. Pebble Pond Preschool is listed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to care for children during these specified times only. If you are late picking up your child, a \$1 PER MINUTE late penalty will be charged to your account. Late penalties must be paid to Pebble Pond Preschool before

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the child can return to care. Late pick-ups force staff members to work time for which they are not paid. Also, children know when they are supposed to be picked up and may become anxious when you are late. Therefore, we urge you to read our late pick up policy carefully and please remember to pick up your child promptly throughout the school year.

At 5 minutes past the scheduled pick up time teachers will begin to call the parents. If parents are unreachable, the emergency contacts listed by the parents will be called after 15 minutes. Please avoid late pick up by planning to arrive 5-10 minutes early. If parents and emergency contacts are unreachable after 30 minutes local authorities may be contacted.

Parent Responsibilities

Sign In and Release

Children must be signed in and out every day at the time of drop off or pick up.

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Parent Protocol

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to staff.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's cubby, at the parent corner, or in e-mail.
- Pick up your child's papers/projects daily. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be aware of the scheduled meal times (breakfast 8:00-8:45; lunch 11:45; snack 3:00pm) and make sure your child arrives in time to be included in those meals. Be sure to contact the center if your child will not be in by 9:30 to be included in the lunch count or you will be required to provide a lunch for that day.
- Please do not allow your child to bring gum or candy to the classroom. We STRONGLY encourage you to allow your child to eat what we are serving that day, unless, of course, food allergies are a concern. In that case, we ask that you bring a note from your physician. Any food brought from home should be vegan and will only be served at the designated meal times. All personal food must be labeled and be taken home at the end of each day.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing. Please take soiled clothing home promptly.
- **In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home.** Pebble Pond Preschool cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use during naptime and for Show & Tell purposes. Your child's teacher will notify you when the class will have Show & Tell.

Clothing

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left at Pebble Pond Preschool. Please remember we are a Vegan facility and no animal bi-products should be worn. As the children will be outside for 25-50% of the day, they will need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, when they wait too long before going to the bathroom, or if they get wet on the playground. Children should wear sturdy play shoes, tennis shoes, or if appropriate, snow boots. **Cowboy boots, clogs, flip flops, and party shoes can be hazardous at school, and should not be worn.** Children should wear comfortable, easily managed play clothes to school, appropriate for the weather. Remember we play outdoors 12 months a year. Please be conscious daily what clothing your child will need to be comfortable throughout the seasons. And keep in mind that preschool life is active and can be messy. If your child goes home in Pebble Pond Preschool clothing, please wash and return these items as soon as possible. (All Pebble Pond clothing is labeled for you to better identify and return.)

In order to keep a clean and healthy environment, Pebble Pond Preschool has a “no shoes inside” policy. Parents must provide a hard-soled slipper or similar indoor shoe to leave in the child's cubby. A bench with shoe storage is located in the lobby and children will change their shoes upon entry or exit of the center.

Personal Belongings

We use washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may still get stained from just being kids! Due to the fact that we spend a lot of time outside in the nature area, the children will get dirty. Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!!

Please leave all valuable items at home since Pebble Pond Preschool cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

Nap Time

Supervised rest periods are required for all preschool children. Please provide a blanket and small pillow (optional) for naptime. These items must fit inside the child's cubby and be taken home on weekly for washing. We encourage all children to sleep outside weather permitting. The outdoor sleeping is based on an opt-out basis for the children. If you do not wish for your child to sleep outdoors, then please speak with the owner to sign an Outdoor Sleeping Declination.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside for 25-50% of every day rain or shine. Here at Pebble Pond Preschool we believe there is no such thing as “bad” weather. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Weather can change quickly, please make sure your child has appropriate clothing available for outdoor play in ALL types of weather.

Field Trips

Field trips will generally be within walking distance and are considered a center wide activity. Information about date, times, and location, will be provided, at least, one week ahead of time. Permission slips must be signed for each child and turned in, no later than the date indicated. A reminder will be posted the week of the fieldtrip with any additional information. The parents or persons dropping off later than our departure time will meet us at the fieldtrip location since there will no children at the center during fieldtrips and are required to sign-in their child with a Pebble Pond Preschool teacher.

Birthdays

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). We will prepare and provide a birthday treat for the children and provide a special activity for your child to help honor their special day.

Parent Code of Conduct

Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. Pebble Pond Preschool prohibits swearing, cursing, or harsh language/tone on our property.

Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Pebble Pond Preschool has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian.

Pebble Pond Preschool must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services does not allow smoking on the premises, either indoors or outdoors.

Parent Participation

We encourage parent involvement, especially helping with the garden, special events, and class parties. Also, if you have a concern, please schedule a time to meet with the classroom teacher and/or the center director.

Parent Notifications

Open communication with parents is very important to children's success. Pebble Pond Preschool has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways that Pebble Pond Preschool may communicate with parents:

- Parent Corner
- Through email notifications
- Written memos placed in your child's weekly folders
- Social media site such as Facebook
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers and/or director
- Pebble Pond Preschool website
- Text message

Custody Situations

Pebble Pond Preschool will NOT get involved with custody disputes. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. We will follow a court order exactly as written. *PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.* It is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parent's information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, Pebble Pond Preschool has the right to terminate care.

Confidentiality

While your child is enrolled in our program, parents may come across confidential information about our program, our staff, and sometimes other children. All information received from Pebble Pond Preschool must always remain confidential. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.

Questions or Concerns

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with us. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. From time to time, the owner may complete a Parent Concern Form. Parents will receive a copy of this form with the appropriate outcome.

Parent Referrals

We greatly appreciate your business and know that you will be so pleased with our service that you will tell all your friends and acquaintances about us! If one of those families decides to enroll their child(ren), we will credit your account the amount of \$100 after that family has been with us for 90 days. Our greatest advertising asset is you!!

Discipline and Guidance Policy

Pebble Pond Preschool staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are: acknowledgment and encouragement of appropriate behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. There may be times during the day when a supervised separation time is needed. This is a "time-out" and is used according to the child's age and development and limited to one minute per year of the child's age. We also use a method developed by a local child behavioral therapist called "chill out". This involves a three-step process to help the child control their behavior and emotions. It is like a mini-meditation. Pebble Pond Preschool staff will never use Corporal Punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills, which help them cope in their physical and social environment. The aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Should unwanted behaviors become a safety concern for the child or others in the facility, Pebble Pond Preschool will set up a behavior improvement plan with the family. If the behaviors do not improve, the results could lead to suspension and/or expulsion from the program.

Biting

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper

communication will help determine why a child is biting. Pebble Pond Preschool will work with parents to find ways to support all children when biting occurs. We will make every effort to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

Attendance

Absences

If your child will be absent from school, we ask that you notify the front office by 9:30am each day. To ensure the safety of your child, Pebble Pond Preschool will attempt to call parents that have not reported an absence.

Health and Safety Policies

Well Checks

Pebble Pond Preschool will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If we notice anything unusual with a child, they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify us when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects.

Illness and Exclusion

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. Pebble Pond Preschool observes the standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

- a. Illness that prevents the child from participating in childcare activities, ***including outdoor play.***
- b. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
- c. Oral temperature of 100.5 or armpit temperature of 100.
- d. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, 1 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices. Your child will be taken care of in the administrative office in a comfortable area.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of *severe* illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, Pebble Pond Preschool may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom-free for 24-hours.

Medication

Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember, Pebble Pond Preschool is designed for **well** children.

If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- ❑ **Form 7238 Authorization for dispensing medication** must be filled out and turned in with all medication.
- ❑ **Prescription medication will be accepted only if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date.**
- ❑ Nonprescription medication, including sunscreen and bug spray, may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. Medication must be in an unopened container and accompanied with Form 7238.
- ❑ Medication must be taken home after the last date that the medication is administered.

Procedures for Handling Emergencies

In case of minor injury or accident, we will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), we will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, we will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file (enrollment form) in case of such an emergency.**

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the we will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

Inclement Weather Policies

Pebble Pond Preschool will open most days during inclement weather. Please check the following for announcement of closing.

- Home page of website www.pebblepondpreschool.com
- Facebook page [Pebble Pond Preschool](#)
- Email

In case of serious emergencies such as hurricanes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive. There are no refunds for days missed due to inclement weather.

It is Pebble Pond Preschool's intention to be open and provide child care service every weekday of the year, excluding holidays. Unfortunately, inclement weather, natural/national disasters or a major building issue may disrupt service, occasionally. We will do our best to contact families by text, call, email, and/or post on social media. Parent/Guardian will be responsible for tuition for up to 3 business days, should this occur.

Emergency Plan

In the event of a fire or severe weather emergency, all children will be relocated to the southeast corner of the Universal Church or the neighboring Library. When all kids are accounted for and safe parents will be contacted to come pick up the children.

School Safety Policies

Parents need to personally escort their child/ren inside, make contact with a teacher, and sign in when dropping off. When picking up the parent/guardian must sign out before we can release the child/ren. Parents are welcome to visit the center any time during the day to observe their child without prior approval. However, if you would like to stay and spend time with your child during activities, please see the office a week prior so we can do a proper criminal history check, as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Our facility is equipped with a fire alarm system and fire drills are practiced monthly.

You will be notified of any injuries, other than minor scrapes or bumps, with a phone call. We will also give you a written report at pick up time. First aid will be applied to minor injuries. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all medical fees.

Gang-Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty. Pebble Pond Preschool is a GANG-FREE ZONE.

Immunization Requirements

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in Pebble Pond Preschool. A copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

From time to time Pebble Pond Preschool may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal belief or health reasons. A notarized affidavit or physician's report must be on file for these children.

Immunization records must be current for all employees. Employees are not required to have a flu shot.

Tuberculin Testing Requirements

Based on local health department guidelines, proof of TB testing is not required for children to be enrolled in our program.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. Pebble Pond Preschool will schedule annual screenings at our school for an additional fee. Parents may also bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

Food Service and Preparation

Pebble Pond Preschool will provide breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack to our preschool children at no additional fee. All meals served at the center are vegan and low in sugar. Breakfast is served only between 8:00 am and 8:45 am; children arriving later should already have eaten at home. Lunch is served between 11:45 and 12:15 pm. An afternoon snack will be served after nap. All meals will be served outside, weather permitting. Menus will be posted at the beginning of the month. Please advise the center of any allergies or dietary restrictions. Candy and chewing gum are not permitted in the center.

Animals

I have two medium dogs and one small dog. All animals are very child friendly and are not allowed in the Childcare area. They will be let in and out at various times of the day to use the restroom and then back into their holding rooms until the children leave for the day.

Photographs

Pebble Pond Preschool believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera and will only be used in or for our program. Parents are required to fill out our photo release form at the time of enrollment. Pebble Pond may use these photos of the children for our website, Facebook, and other advertisement with parent approval. Please note: during certain parent events, such as Pre-K graduation, Holiday programs, and carnivals, photographs may be taken by family members. If you wish for your child to not be photographed please discuss options with the center director.

Cyber Identity / Social Networking

Cyber identity and social networking is very exciting these days. However, please understand that we will not be participating in social networking with children that are enrolled in our program. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Child Abuse Reporting Law Requirements

Pebble Pond Preschool staff are **REQUIRED** by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to **suspect** the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receives annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. Pebble Pond Preschool has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and parents through trainings, memos and monthly newsletters. Pebble Pond Preschool will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect.

We may not notify parents when the police or CPS are called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except on the recommendation of CPS or the police when they are called.

Some examples of abuse and neglect are: leaving a child in a vehicle unattended, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises on opposite sides of the body, and child hygiene issues.

If you feel you or someone you know needs assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

We, at Pebble Pond Preschool, know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in preschool education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children at Pebble Pond Preschool.