



# Parent Handbook

## 2021-2022

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## Welcome to Children of Joy!

*A Ministry of Spirit of Joy! Lutheran Church*

Parents and families,

Welcome to Spirit of Joy! We are so glad to have you here as we begin our new year.

Children of Joy! is an essential part of our ministry here at Spirit of Joy! "Let the children come to me" said Jesus. The shaping of our children; their emotional, education, and spiritual development is one of the most important purposes of any community of faith. We are privileged to have your children here and we thank you for trusting us to be a part of their formation.

As Pastor of Spirit of Joy!, my responsibilities include being a part of our preschool ministry. You will see me around school regularly - at drop off and pick up and throughout the day. I will get to know your children through the school and our chapel program. I hope you will take the time to introduce yourself when you see me.

Please know that I am personally praying for all of our students and their families and our congregation is praying for you in our public worship.

If you already have a church that you call home, I hope you will occasionally come and visit with us on a Sunday morning. It is wonderful for our church members to see the children and families whose lives are touched by our ministry at Children of Joy! If you do not have a church home, come and worship with us on a Sunday morning. You will discover a group of joy-filled people, committed to growing in faith and discipleship. This is a place where you can know the love of God and of community.

If I can ever do anything for you or your family, please don't hesitate to ask. Stop in the church office anytime or feel free to call my cell at 281-974-8400. You can also connect on the church website ([sojoy.org](http://sojoy.org)) and on Facebook to get the latest news from the church ([facebook.com/sojoy.elca](https://facebook.com/sojoy.elca)).

Blessings on the start of this new school year!  
Pastor David



## What is Spirit of Joy! Lutheran Church?

As a ministry of this church, we at Children of Joy! want you to know about us as a part of a spiritual community, and what you can expect from us in service to your children as they learn and grow in the context of this faith community.

We are a worshipping community, passionate about the way the Spirit of God moves through worship.

*Join us Sundays at 10 am for worship that is uplifting and engaging.*

We are a community who is growing deeper in faith and closer in relationship with one another.

*Every Sunday, we gather for intergenerational learning at 9 am. Other educational opportunities can be found on the church website.*

We are a servant community who trusts that Jesus makes a difference not just in our lives but also in the world.

*We engage in service activities throughout the year, including some that we invite our preschool ministry to join us for. In addition, we are part of a broader ministry – the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – that serves communities in need around the world.*

As Christians with Lutheran roots, the content of our faith is in agreement with the broad Christian tradition. We believe in the Holy Trinity: our Father who created the world, Jesus who restores the world, and the Holy Spirit who give us life. We emphasize the power of God's grace, and Jesus' command to love God and our neighbors.

If you have any questions about our ministry or our Christian identity here at SOJ!, then please contact Pastor David, or visit our website at [www.sojoy.org](http://www.sojoy.org).

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Children of Joy! Preschool. Children of Joy! Preschool began with a commitment to make the love of Christ known through a nurturing early childhood program. You will see this commitment today as you watch preschool children engaged in building block towers, toddlers surrounded by loving hands helping them establish bonds of trust, skilled teachers facilitating social skills, and children actively participating in art, dramatic play, language, chapel and music activities in a hands-on environment.

We look forward to getting to know your child and you. We believe that an essential element of a quality early childhood environment is a mutually supportive relationship between parents and staff. By sharing the joys and challenges of the growth process, we believe we can optimally support each child's development.

As Director of Children of Joy! Preschool, I am proud to invite you to explore our program. At COJ! children are given the freedom to be creative while learning vital social, spiritual, and cognitive principles, which will help them meet their exciting future endeavors.

Kimberly Sheffer, Director  
Children of Joy! Preschool

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## **Purpose of Children of Joy!**

As a part of the education and faith formation ministry of Spirit of Joy! Lutheran Church, the ministry of Children of Joy! is creating a *joy-filled, faith-growing, life-changing* learning community.

## **Values of Children of Joy!**

### **Core Beliefs**

*Faith formation at Children of Joy! is broadly inclusive and seeks to include and affirm Christians from a wide variety of traditions. These are the deep roots of who we are as a community of faith, which shape how we teach faith in our preschool ministry.*

We worship the God of creation who delivered Israel through the Sea; the same God who became flesh in Jesus Christ in order to share the power of God's Kingdom; the same God who moves through our lives as a powerful, inspiring Spirit.

We are saved by grace - at the heart of our faith, our lives, and our community is the gift of God toward us and the world.

The Christian life and community is marked by the gifts of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

### **Philosophy**

- We seek to create a community that encourages young children to become lifelong, enthusiastic learners.
- We believe that experiential learning and a nurturing Christian community helps children to develop the skills and character they need to grow and mature.
- Our approach to learning is based on a growing body of research that affirms that children learn most effectively through a concrete, play oriented approach to early childhood education.

## Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on developmentally appropriate practices while integrating Christian principles and daily Christian values. Child-directed, child initiated, teacher supported play is an essential part of the Children of Joy! program. The children will enjoy a classroom setting rich with concrete exploration and involvement with adults and other children. Stimulating outdoor activities, creative opportunities, and a schedule with alternating quiet and active play, and individual and cooperative play create an environment that meets the unique needs of children. Individual teachers and teaching teams design their classroom and lesson plans based on ELEA's guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices.

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## Goals of Children of Joy! Preschool

### Social/Emotional Goals

- To experience a sense of self-esteem
- To express feelings appropriately
- To exhibit a positive attitude toward learning
- To develop independence, express choices and solve problems
- To develop cooperative, pro-social behavior
- To learn to deal with social conflict
- To develop responsibility and self-regulation

### Cognitive Goals

- To acquire concepts and information about the world
- To expand logical thinking skills
- To expand verbal communication skills
- To develop language arts concepts and skills
- To develop math and science concepts and skills
- To foster discovery, exploration and curiosity

### Physical Goals

- To enhance large motor skills
- To enhance fine motor skills
- To develop the use of all senses as modes of learning
- To promote healthy physical development
- To encourage development of creative thinking skills
- To use many different media to explore creativity in the arts

### Spiritual Goals

- To establish a loving Christian atmosphere
- To present Christian holidays, events and concepts in developmentally appropriate ways
- To strengthen character development through example and curricula
- To provide support for the whole family in their spiritual journey



## **Programs**

Children of Joy! ("COJ!") offers classes for children ages 18 months through 5 years. All classes are from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm.

- Toddlers: 18-24 month-old children
- Twos: 2 years old by November 1<sup>st</sup>
- Threes: 3 years old by November 1<sup>st</sup>
- Pre-K: 4 years old by November 1<sup>st</sup>
- Transition: 5 years old by November 1<sup>st</sup>
- Fun Friday: Optional program for Pre-K and Transition classes

## **Licenses**

Children of Joy! Preschool is licensed by the Texas Health and Human Services and abides by the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers.

Parents are invited to review and discuss with the Director any questions or concerns about policies and procedures of the preschool. Parents are welcome to visit the preschool anytime during the hours of operation to observe their child, the preschool's operation, and program activities. They may also review a copy of minimum standards and the preschool's most recent Licensing inspection report. The following contact information is provided to assist parents:

- Local Licensing Office: (936) 525-2187
- Website: [www.hhsc.state.tx.us](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us)
- Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-525-5400.

## **Admission**

Children of Joy! does not discriminate against a child because of race, color, sex, national origin or creed. Child Day Care operations public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title III. If you believe that such an operation may be practicing discrimination in violation of Title III, you may call the ADA Information Line at (800)514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Before a child's first day of attendance, the following must be on file with the preschool office:

- Registration form
- Enrollment form

- Health statement and immunization records
- Statement of allergies and Food Allergy Emergency Care Plan

Enrollment is considered to be ongoing unless a parent or guardian notifies the preschool office. Medical forms and enrollment forms will only be completed once unless notified by the Director.

## **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition installments are due and payable on the FIRST day of each month. If tuition has not been received by the 10th day of the month, a \$35 late fee will be charged. If tuition has not been paid by the 25th day of the month, the preschool reserves the right to drop a student from the class. Please feel free to discuss with the Director of the preschool any problems encountered with payment of fees. Refer to the parent information packet for a current class and fee schedule.

For families who enroll before August 1<sup>st</sup>, regular installment payments are due in May (Tuition Deposit) and then again in August through April. Your May tuition is the next school years Tuition Deposit if returning. For families enrolling after August 1<sup>st</sup>, the annual tuition will be calculated for the actual amount of days they will be attending and divided into monthly installments for the remaining months.

Tuition may be paid via cash, check, credit/debit card or automatic bank draft. The balance can be paid online at [myprocare.com](http://myprocare.com). You will need to create an account using your email address. You may also submit the Automatic Draft Payment form. This form can be found on our website, [cojpreschool.org](http://cojpreschool.org) under the "Registration Info" tab. Automatic drafts will be drafted on the first of the month or the first business day thereafter.

Checks can be setup to be mailed directly from your financial institution, dropped in the front office or dropped in the tuition drop box in the classroom hallway. Please bring all cash to the office.

Families who wish to pay tuition for the entire year should come to the preschool office for the total amount due. Otherwise, tuition installments will be billed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the previous month and email statements will be sent.

Children of Joy! is a non-profit program striving to cover all expenses. Fees are set to reflect the high quality of early childhood education provided. As in any other school, expenses are constant. There is no discount, refund or allowance for absence, illness, vacation, holidays, teacher workdays, unexpected school

closures or weather related school closures.

### Registration Fee

A registration fee is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable.

### Supply Fees

A supply fee is collected twice yearly, due August 1 and again January 1 to help defray the costs of consumable supplies (crayons, paint, paper, etc.) used.

### Tuition Deposit

A tuition deposit, equal to one month's installment is due at the time of registration to ensure a place for your child. This fee becomes the tuition installment for the month of May at the end of the school year. Tuition Deposits are non-refundable after May 31.

### Returned Checks

A \$35 fee will be charged for all returned checks and declined bank drafts or credit cards. COJ! reserves the right to request cash or a cash equivalent for future payments when a check is returned due to insufficient funds. In cases of repeated returns, Children of Joy! may find it necessary to require payment in cash or credit card only.

### Late Pick Up Fee

A late pick up fee will be charged at the rate of \$1 per minute after 2:10 pm. After 2:10 pm parents must pick up their child in the Director's office. Habitual lateness may result in additional fees or withdrawal from the program.

### Waiting Lists

A waiting list for each group/class will be maintained for those interested in enrolling should space become available. The waiting list is for one school year only and will not apply for future school years.

### Extended Absences

Extended leave is any time a child is not in preschool for more than two consecutive weeks for potential absences such as travel, family emergency, medical treatment, etc.

A leave of absence does NOT excuse the family from tuition and fees that are due during the absence. All fees and tuition are required to be paid on time as if the child is attending preschool. This will guarantee the child's placement in the classroom upon return to the school. If payment is more than 30 days late, the child will be removed from the preschool forfeiting his/her tuition deposit and must apply for re-enrollment upon return. Re-enrollment will include paying a new registration fee and tuition deposit.

An Extended Absence Form must be completed and turned into the preschool office two weeks before the absence occurs.

#### Withdrawal Policy

Withdrawal from the preschool requires a **30-day written** notice and completion of the withdrawal form. At this time, any remaining tuition deposit will be applied to the balance. Families are responsible for paying any amounts up to the 30 days notice.

#### Cancellation of Enrollment

Some children are not ready for group activities at an early age. If, in the judgment of the preschool staff, a child shows by his/her participation or development that he/she is not ready for this type of activity, the school reserves the right to request cancellation of the enrollment. In this event, any unused tuition would be refunded. If, for other reasons, a child is withdrawn by the parents the school requires 30 days written notice.

## **School Closings**

#### Inclement Weather

Any day Conroe ISD is closed due to bad weather, Children of Joy! Preschool will also be closed. Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if unsafe conditions arise and children are already in school. There will be no tuition or schedule adjustment due to inclement weather. COJ! Preschool will not make up any inclement weather days.

#### Unexpected School Closings

COJ! Preschool will follow the guidance of childcare licensing and local health officials regarding public health issues. Should COJ! Preschool unexpectedly close due to public health issues, parents will be contacted as soon as possible. The Tuition and Fee policy as stated previously will apply.

#### Rainy Day Dismissal

Children of Joy! Preschool will announce Rainy Day Dismissal via text and email on days when it is raining too hard for regular arrival or dismissal procedures. Rainy Day drop off will begin at 8:55 rather than 9:00 a.m. Rainy Day dismissal will begin at 1:50 rather than 1:55 p.m.

#### Vacation

COJ! Preschool will closely follow the CISD School Calendar. The school will observe the holiday schedule of CISD. Refer to the parent information packet for a current CISD school calendar and COJ! Calendar.

## **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

### Drop-off and Pick-Up

Classrooms open at 9:00 a.m. Due to licensing standards, teachers are not able to accept children until 9:00 a.m. Parents may walk their child into the classroom and sign them in or they may use carline which will begin at 9:00 a.m. Due to the size of our classrooms and the flow of the classroom, please make the drop off of your child a short routine. It is easier for your child to adjust to the classroom with a regular routine.

Parents MUST accompany their child into the classroom unless using carline. Children may not be dropped off at the entrance of the building, sent into the building alone, or by a sibling under the age of 16 years. Staff must be made aware of your child's presence at arrival and before departure. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their child before and after pickup.

Pick-up in the afternoon can be done by coming into the building or by carline. We will begin preparing the children to go home at 1:50. Please be prompt in picking up your child. If you are running late, a phone call is greatly appreciated. Late fees as described earlier will be assessed after 2:10pm. The teachers reserve afternoon time to clean up and prepare for the next day.

### Carline

For the convenience of parents and caregivers, we offer a carline which allows your child to be met by a staff member and escorted into their classroom. Carline is optional and does not begin until 9:00am. Pick-up time begins at 1:55pm.

Carline drop-off and pick-up will begin at the Stop Sign around the Bush circle. All COJ traffic will go RIGHT around Bush Elementary and proceed. If you are walking your child in, you will stay in the LEFT lane and proceed to the COJ parking lot. If you are dropping your child off in carline, you will stay in the RIGHT lane and stop at the stop sign until you are directed by a COJ staff member and proceed to the "COJ Carline Starts Here" sign. A staff member will remove your child from the car as well as buckle them in at the end of the day. On rainy days, please understand that carline will move at a slower pace. We want to ensure the children are not getting wet, so we will be loading them a few cars at a time. A Carline instructional video can be found at <https://youtu.be/P-P5Rt4MveM>.

At the start of the year, you will receive a carline sign for your car. This carline sign will need to be prominently displayed in your car window during afternoon carline. Should you need a second sign for any reason, please let us know.

## Release Policies

To ensure our children's safety, we can only release children to persons listed as authorized pick-up/emergency contacts on the enrollment form filed in the Preschool Office. Any change in drop-off or pick-up must be accompanied by a signed note from a parent and the Preschool Office must be notified. A photo of their Driver's License will be required for all first time emergency contacts. Contacts may be added at any time throughout the year.

## **General Guidelines and Policies**

### Medical Records

A written statement from a health-care professional who has examined the child within the past year, immunization record, Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan (if needed) and an authorization to obtain emergency medical care statement **must** be on file prior to the child's first day of attendance. A written notice of allergies, physical problems or special limitations regarding the child must be provided by the parent to the Director at the time of enrollment and as new conditions arise. These records are kept on file at the preschool and must be updated as your child receives immunizations.

### Illness

If, in the opinion of the teacher or Director, a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified and will need to make arrangements to pick up the child. The preschool does not have a nurse or a sick room and cannot keep an ill child. All communicable diseases **must** be reported to the Director. The Texas Department of Health requires we maintain this information and in some cases, report diseases directly to them.

An ill child will not be admitted to school if one or more of the following exist:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the facility's activities.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
- Any of the following: vomiting, diarrhea, an undiagnosed rash, or a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. State licensing regulations also require that a child be sent home if any of these symptoms develop during the school day.

Children should be free of fever, diarrhea and vomiting at least 24 hours, without the aid of medication, before returning to school. In cases of a communicable disease being suspected in the classroom (strep throat, pink eye, etc.), parents

will be notified in writing or by phone. In return, we request that you report to the school when your child has been exposed or diagnosed with a particular infection or disease. Parents may be required to obtain a physician's statement certifying that the child is well before returning to school following absence due to a contagious illness.

### Immunizations

Children at COJ!, must have up-to-date immunization records to be enrolled and provide documentation of immunizations throughout the school year (as scheduled). If the parent has religious, philosophical, or moral beliefs that are opposed to such immunizations, they must submit an affidavit stating the reason why they oppose such immunizations. If it is for a medical reason, a letter from the doctor stating why the child is unable to be immunized is required.

If a child is exempt from immunizations and there is an emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of the health department, the child may be excluded from school.

### Allergies

Children with allergies must have a Food Allergy Emergency Care Plan on file in the preschool office. This form must be signed by the child's physician and give clear instructions in the event of exposure and/or allergic reaction. Any medication that is included in the instructions, such as an epi pen or Benadryl must be kept on hand at all times.

### Medication

If your child requires daily medications, please see the Director for more information. As medicine often affects the way your child responds in class, please inform your child's teachers if you give your child any medication before coming to school. To protect the health of other children, COJ! is unable to administer Tylenol, Motrin, or other medications that mask the symptoms of illnesses. Other medications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Bug Spray and Sunscreen

The preschool will provide bug spray and sunscreen for use on the children. If you have a particular brand that you would like used on your child, please bring it to the Preschool Office to be checked in.

Permission to apply these products is requested at the time of Admission. Bug spray and sunscreen will be applied by the teachers on an "as needed" basis.

### Accidents/Injury

In case of a serious accident, a parent or other designated persons will be

notified. If such persons are unavailable to come and care for the child, the child will be taken to the doctor or hospital specified by the parent on the medical form. For this reason, it is imperative that the school have the necessary information and authorization for medical care for each child enrolled. Accident reports are filed in the Preschool Office and parents are notified of any serious injury.

#### Vision, Hearing and Speech Screening

Vision and hearing screenings will be conducted for four- and five-year-olds, as required by state law. Parents will be notified as to when the screenings will occur. Vision and Hearing screenings are provided by Webster Therapy Center. Speech screenings are provided by our in-house Speech Therapist, Yvonne Avocato.

#### Lunch and Snacks

A lunch and non-carbonated beverage should be sent from home each day. Parents are responsible for seeing that foods needing refrigeration are properly bagged and placed in appropriate containers. A cold pack, marked with the child's name needs to be put in each child's lunch box if perishable foods are included to prevent spoilage.

Prepare a simple lunch with foods that your child can eat easily. Food cut into bite-size pieces is most appropriate. Some favorite foods may be cheese, bread, fresh vegetable sticks, fresh fruits and juices, raisins and sandwiches. We encourage parents to send a wide variety of foods. All children will be encouraged, but not forced to eat. Candy and carbonated beverages should not be included in lunches. For toddler and two-year-old classes, we request that lunches be sent in one divided container. All children will be encouraged to be as self-sufficient at lunch time as possible. For children 4 and under, hotdogs, raw carrots, whole grapes, etc are considered choking hazards. If there is a food allergy in a classroom (i.e. milk/wheat), we will let all parents know. **Due to allergies, we are a nut free school.** No nuts or nut products will be allowed in the school.

Parents will provide their child with a daily snack to be consumed during snack time. Snacks should be small and something non-messy that is easily consumed. Please place the snack in a separate baggie or container in your child's backpack.

"Star of the Week" is a special snack activity that is incorporated into each classroom. This is an opportunity for parents and their child to plan a special snack to share with their class two to three times during the year.



### Rest Time

Rest times for children are set based upon age level and may be adjusted as the year progresses. Children enrolled in the Pre-K or Transition programs may have a short "brain break" instead of a rest period.

In the case of children who do not nap, the child will be given adequate time to fall asleep and if the child is not sleeping, he or she will be provided a quiet activity during rest time.

Nap mats are to be provided by parents and will be taken home daily. The mats are to be laundered regularly and must have their child's name and the top and bottom clearly marked. Due to a new licensing regulation, children may NOT have pacifiers with stuffed toys attached to them.

### Birthdays and Holidays

Since birthdays are such an important day in a child's life, teachers will provide recognition in an appropriate way. Please consult with your child's teacher about anything special you might wish to provide that day. A list of suggested snacks for special birthday celebrations will be provided. We ask that any snacks sent for the class be nutritious. For those children whose birthdays fall during the summer months, it is suggested that you help your child choose a day during the school year when he/she would like to celebrate a special "substitute birthday". If birthday party invitations are distributed at the preschool, an invitation must go home to every child in the class. We do ask that birthday recognition not interfere with the regular preschool day. It is appropriate to send a special snack to recognize your child's special day; however, we cannot incorporate birthday parties, treat bags, etc. into the preschool day. Licensing prohibits balloons.

Appropriate traditional holidays will be recognized. Parents will be invited to participate in the celebrations by bringing special refreshments, reading a holiday story or doing a special holiday activity with the class. Consult with your child's teacher on specific holiday celebration information. If possible, we do ask that parents make other arrangements for younger siblings on party days.

### Discipline and Guidance

Discipline is teaching a child appropriate behavior. Discipline and guidance shall be consistent and based on each child's individual needs and developmental level of understanding. Teachers work toward promoting positive self-esteem, self-discipline, self-control, and acceptable behavior. Children are redirected to other activities, encouraged to use words, and given choices. Teachers try to use natural consequences and help children learn problem-solving skills. Learning appropriate behavior is a large part of gaining social skills during the preschool years. There will be no cruel, harsh or unusual

treatment of any child and no child shall ever receive corporal punishment. If difficult behavior occurs where the child does not respond to routine guidance methods such as redirection or in a situation where a child is hurting himself or another child, a brief supervised separation from the group may be used either in the classroom or in the Director's office. Should further guidance be necessary, parents may be asked to pick up their child from school. If a child does not handle the normal routine, structure, and rules of the classroom well with the normal discipline, the Director reserves the right to counsel with parents and possibly remove the child.

### Conferences

Parents of all children will be asked to attend at least one scheduled parent conference during the school year. Formal discussion of your child's progress may be requested at any time during the year that is convenient for both parent and teacher. It is our policy not to discuss concerns about children at the classroom door in front of the children or in front of other parents. Teachers will send home notes, make phone calls or schedule a time to talk with you privately.

### Parent Communication

Our primary form of communication is email. If this is not convenient for you, please notify the Preschool Office and paper copies of communication can be sent home. Daily or weekly communication is provided by the teachers based upon the child's age.

The preschool also utilizes the "Remind 101" service commonly used by school districts. All parents will be asked to sign up for text messaging services for their individual classrooms and for the Preschool as a whole. Important school information will be sent to families via text messages.

Communication between the teacher/parent and Director is very important. Please let us know of any unusual/special event or changes in your child's life. All information shared is confidential.

### Custody Arrangements

In the event of a current or ongoing custody situation, any custody agreements or court documents detailing the custodial arrangements for children at the preschool must be on file in the Director's office. These documents change often; the preschool must have the most recent copy on file. A parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled at COJ! who is not the child's residential parent shall be permitted unlimited access to the school and be afforded the same rights as the residential parent unless a protective order is on file. In the case that the school has not met the parent, he/she will be asked to provide ID prior to visiting

or picking up the child.

\*\*At no time will COJ enforce a parenting or visitation schedule.

### Protection Orders

If, at any time, a protection order is filed for a parent/guardian/family member of a child enrolled at COJ!, the parent must provide documentation of the protective order. If the person the protection order has been made against attempts to have contact with the named child, the police department will be contacted. The other parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

### Nursing Mothers

Children of Joy! Preschool offers a private area for mothers of nursing children. Anyone wishing to use the Resource Room of the Church to nurse their baby is welcome to do so. If the Resource Room is unavailable, the Preschool Office will be made available at any time.

### Problem Resolution

If a parent feels there is a situation causing concern between the teacher and child, teacher and parent, or Director and parent, the following procedure should be used.

1. Parent(s) should schedule a conference with the teacher/Director to address the concern.
2. If parent(s) feel the situation is still unresolved, they should inform the teacher that they are filing a written grievance and ask the Director for a grievance form.
3. If the grievance is with the Director, a parent may file the grievance form with a member of Preschool Team.
4. The Director (or Preschool Team) will accept the grievance form, review it, and then schedule a conference with the parent(s) and the teacher.
5. If the parent(s) still feel that the problem is unresolved, then the grievance can be submitted to the COJ! Preschool Team

### School Visits

COJ! staff will assist the children in their adjustment to their new school and friends. Both children and parents can become acquainted with the new classroom and environment and establish a rapport with new teachers through:

1. Being contacted by your child's teacher in the weeks before school begins by note or phone call.
2. Attending classroom visits to meet the teacher at school before school begins, and having a gradual entry process by which children attend for shorter periods of the school day to gradually ease into the classroom routine.

3. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. For toddler and two-year-old classes, visits are usually more successful after children have fully acclimated to the new classroom and teachers. Parents are asked to check in at the Preschool Office if visiting during school hours.

### Parent Involvement

One of the key factors in the success of any church/school program is the involvement of interested, caring parents/volunteers. There are many opportunities for parents to be actively involved with the preschool. All parents are encouraged to volunteer and be involved in Children of Joy! Preschool. The Preschool Team will share ideas for improving and assisting the preschool staff as well as providing a forum for educational parenting and family-life education programs. The group also will occasionally sponsor fundraising events when the preschool has special needs.

We encourage our parents to volunteer their time as helpers at fundraising activities, special events, room parent, room parties and as “helping hands” when teachers need extra help cutting, gluing, or assembling special projects. All volunteers must check in/out in the Church/Preschool office. If you have any special skills, holiday traditions, talents or your job is one you would like to share with the children (doctor, dentist etc.), please feel free to contact us for you to present to the children.

### Parental Responsibility

Anytime a parent is on the preschool premises, whether it be during the school day, before school hours or after school hours, parents bear the liability for their children in case of accident or injury.

### Items from Home

Books that a teacher can read to the class are always welcome; however, it is generally wise to help your child learn to leave his/her toys at home since preschool age children can have a difficult time sharing their toys. Based on this, we request that you NOT allow your child to bring toys to school. At no time will toy guns or war toys be allowed in any classroom.

### What to Bring to School

Each child should bring a large-sized backpack to school each day. Please make sure that the backpack is large enough to hold the daily communication folder, a change of clothing, and artwork that will be sent home. Part of our curriculum is to build self-independence where we encourage the children to carry their own things to carline in the afternoon, it is much easier if they can carry most of their things in one bag. Please check your child's backpack regularly for information and to ensure it remains free of any valuable

belongings or small items which may pose a choking hazard.

### Clothing and Toilet Training

Children should be dressed comfortably for messy, active play. For safety purposes, it is necessary that your child wear athletic-type shoes. Children will be playing outside daily; therefore, closed-toed athletic-type shoes would be the most appropriate. All outdoor clothing must be clearly marked with the child's name. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

All children should have a complete change of clothes in case of accidents. Clothing should be comfortable, easy for the child to manage (buttons in front, elastic waist bands, etc.). Please dress children who are not toilet trained in clothing that will easily accommodate diaper changing. Please send disposable diapers/pull-ups and a supply of wipes for the day.

All children enrolled in the Pre-K or Transition program must be toilet trained before the start of the school year.

### Staff Vaccinations

COJ! Preschool staff are recommended to receive the COVID-19, influenza (annually) and DTaP (pertussis) vaccinations. COJ! Preschool will encourage the use of protective medical equipment to protect employees and children in care from exposure to possible disease.

### Security/Visiting the School during School Hours

We are as concerned for the safety of your children as much as you are and will take every possible precaution. Therefore, the door on the parking lot entrance will be locked from 9:10 am to 1:45 pm. If you need to enter during these times, please go to the main entrance door by the church reception office and ring the doorbell. An administrative staff member will answer the door. Teachers are not permitted to answer any door during school hours. All persons visiting the school should sign in at the front table and wear a visitor's badge while in the building.

### Safety

Some of the things the staff will help the children learn are; how to use the play equipment safely, walking while in the building, how to enter/leave a car, stranger safety, fire safety drills, and inclement weather drills (including but not limited to flood, tornado or hurricane). Fire drills will be conducted monthly. Severe weather and lock down drills will be conducted quarterly. In the event that the facility has to be evacuated due to medical emergency, communicable disease outbreak, intruder with weapon, explosion or chemical spill, the children will be taken to Barbara Bush Elementary located at 7420 Crownridge Dr. Our alternate location evacuation site is St. Anthony of Padua

Catholic Church located at 7801 Bay Branch Drive.

Children of Joy! Preschool also has a *Crisis Management Plan* which gives detailed instructions for handling the following types of emergencies: intruders, shelter-in-place, evacuation to alternate locations, fire, bomb threats, severe weather alerts, chemical spills, power outages, threatening and/or violent behavior, civil disturbances, medical emergencies, accidents, injuries or deaths, suspicious packages, and school closings. A copy of the plan may be obtained from the Preschool office.

As a licensed early childhood facility, Texas law requires us to post the following announcement:

*“Reporting Abuse and Neglect: Texas law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or law enforcement. Call 1-800-252-5400 to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.” Reports and information are located at: [www.hhsc.state.tx.us](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us).*

**DO NOT LEAVE ANY CHILD UNATTENDED IN A CAR FOR ANY AMOUNT OF TIME; IT IS AGAINST THE LAW.**

After Hours Playground Usage

The COJ playground will open after school hours for families to use. Please follow the posted playground rules. Using the COJ playground after hours is a privilege. Please respect our playground. Failure to do so will result in the playground being closed after school hours.

Gang Free Zone

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of Children of Joy! Preschool.

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

Animals

Animals are always a source of joy for the children as well as a wonderful learning tool for behavior and environment studies. The teacher will notify parents if any type of animal is going to be part of the classroom setting. If parents would like to share a pet from home, notification must be made to the

teacher for approval. Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 826 states that certification of current vaccinations must be presented to the Director prior to the animals visit to the school. Children must have NO contact with chickens, ducks, snakes, lizards, frogs and/or toads.

### Pesticides

Pesticides are applied quarterly after school hours. There are no pesticides applied while the children are in attendance.

### Social Media

COJ! respects the right of parents to use social media. However, because the natures of these sites are essentially public, certain guidelines apply:

1. COJ! parents and families are personally responsible for the content that they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish on a social media network, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, is viewed not only by the intended recipient but any and all individuals who have access to that individual's account.
2. Remember your association and responsibility with COJ! on online social environments. If you identify yourself as a COJ! parent or family, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with parents and students. Even if you do not specifically identify yourself as a parent or family of COJ!, remember that those viewing your online postings may already know that you are a COJ! parent or family.
3. When contributing online, never post confidential student information such as names, addresses or phone numbers.
4. When uploading digital photos to your social media sites, be sure that you do not post photos of students and staff members without their approval.
5. Concerns that you may have with the policies of COJ! and/or with the preschool itself should not be aired publicly on social networking sites.

Any breach of the aforementioned social networking policy may result in action taken by the preschool, including, but not limited to, formal written notice or discontinuation of the mutually agreed upon preschool contract.

**Room Mother, Teacher**  
**Contact Information and Notes**