

# PARENT HANDBOOK



## Child Enrichment Center Kingsland Baptist Church

The Child Enrichment Center welcomes you and your children to our program. It is our goal to provide a safe, loving, Christ-centered environment in which your child can learn and develop. CEC has a non-discrimination policy and accepts applications for enrollment on a first-come, first-served basis without regard to race, religion, sex, national origin, handicaps or disabilities. CEC will accept children in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), its regulations and any other applicable local, state, or federal laws pertaining to the provision of services to those with disabilities. Enrollment of a student with a disability will be handled on a case by case basis during any school year due to staffing and financial limitations. CEC will be unable to provide services to children whose presence or necessary care would fundamentally alter the nature of our child care program.

We have an “open-door” policy and welcome you to visit at any time. We do ask that you not disrupt the classes or take the teacher away from her classroom responsibilities. If you would like to observe in your child’s class, be sure to let the CEC office staff know you are on campus before you enter the classroom. If you need to talk with the teacher, we will be glad to set up a phone conference or a time for you to come in and visit.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

All children will have the option to arrive and depart via carpool or be dropped off and picked up at the classroom door.

**Arrival:** All students will arrive between 8:55 a.m.—9:10 a.m. Parent’s may walk their child to class, or utilize the designated carpool area for their age group. **Carpool tags must be displayed when dropping off and picking up children through the carpool line.** Children in the 15 months, 2 Year Old and 3 Year old classes will have carpool at Entrance 5 and children in the 4 year old and Transition classes will have carpool at Entrance 4. Your child’s teacher will help them from their cars and escort them to class.

\*Parent’s walking in their 4 and 5 year olds will use the South doors near the carpool area. The hallway doors inside the church will be locked.

Please do not leave your car unattended in the carpool lane at any time as it blocks traffic. Please refrain from using your cell phone while in the carpool line. **Do not drop your child off and allow them to walk in by themselves before or after carpool time.**

**Departure:** Children may be picked up at the classroom door from 2:00 p.m. – 2:10 p.m. At 2:10, all hallway doors will be locked so that children can prepare to move to their assigned carpool locations. Afternoon carpool will be in the same locations as morning carpool and will run from 2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**Dismissal List: Your child will only be dismissed to those you have designated on the “Pick-up” portion of your child’s Registration Form.** Our identification method is a driver’s license number, so please list each approved person with their driver’s license number along with the phone number. If you want to change anyone on your authorized list at any time (either permanently or temporarily), you must sign and date the updated information for our records. We will not release a child to anyone under 18 years of age unless we have written permission.

**Late Pick-up:** All children who are not picked up by dismissal time will be brought to the CEC office and parents must come in to pickup their child. Late fees will be charged as detailed under “Enrollment Procedures and Fees.”

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Each child should have a complete change of clothes (including shirt, pants or shorts, underwear and socks) sent daily in their backpack as accidents of all kinds can happen which necessitate a change of clothes. Please have your child dress for school in comfortable play clothes that are appropriate for painting, playing on the floor, and suitable for the weather and playground time. We will go outside every day as long as weather permits.

Please label all jackets, coats, hats, gloves, and any other extra clothing with your child’s first and last name.

It is very important that each child’s belongings (lunch box, backpack, rest mat, blanket) are also labeled with their name. **Please do not allow your child to come to school with toys from home which can get lost or damaged.**

## **COMMUNICATION**

We communicate with parents primarily through email, our CEC website ([www.kinglandcec.org](http://www.kinglandcec.org)), and notes sent home in your child’s backpack. Please check your child’s backpack each day. Your child’s teacher will generate a class calendar each month with activities and snack helpers listed. The class calendar along with the newsletter can be found on our website. It is helpful to print out the calendar and post this in a prominent place in your home to keep abreast of the class activities. Inside the CEC office there is a posting with upcoming events and schedules. Occasionally, notes will be posted on a sign at the carpool drive or at entrance doors. If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding the policies and procedures of the Child Enrichment Center, please feel free to speak to the director or one of the office staff. We will be glad to assist you. If we do have any policy changes during the course of the year, we will notify you as soon as possible through the methods listed above.

**School closings:** Because CEC follows the Katy ISD school calendar (with the following exceptions: start of school, Christmas holiday, Teacher In-service days, and the last day of school), we will also close CEC if Katy schools close due to bad weather or other emergency situations. Please listen to local radio or TV stations to see if Katy schools are in session. When the staff at Kingsland Baptist Church makes the decision to close the facility, CEC will also follow suit.

**Daily reports:** Children in the 15-month-old and 2-year-old classes receive a daily report about their day. This note will include the day’s activities, their temperament, appetite at lunch, etc.

**Progress Reports:** Children in the 3-year-old, 4-year-old and Transition classes will receive a progress report in January and May. This report is a tool for informing parents how their child is progressing in class. Please review the report, sign it, and return it to school the next day. In May, you will keep this progress report. If you would like a conference with your child’s teacher, please call the CEC office at 281-579-9232 to make an appointment.

## DISCIPLINE

Discipline methods used at CEC consist of positive reinforcement and behavior modification techniques. The use of physical punishment at CEC is never permitted. Within the classroom, children will be redirected and reminded of acceptable behavior. If needed, separation from the group to “cool down” or a visit to the director will be used. The director counsels the child and will call the parent if necessary.

Children will not be shamed or berated at CEC. We attempt to teach the children the cause and effect of their behavior. If your child is experiencing a change in the home environment that may result in changes in their behavior, please notify the child’s teacher or the director. Teachers and/or the director will notify parents of behavior that is occurring frequently and is not responding to modification techniques.

**Suspension and Expulsion Policy:** For persistent or excessive behavior problems, parents will be contacted by the Director. An individualized plan that sets forth positive behavior expectations may be developed in order to ensure that a safe learning environment exists for all staff and students.

Further corrective measures may also be taken as the Director deems necessary, including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from the program if it is determined to be in the best interest of the child or other children in the program.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**Drills:** Fire Drills are held monthly in accordance with our Texas licensing requirements. Disaster and Lock-Down drills are held four times during the school year. These drills often make quite an impression on children but are necessary to help prepare each child for an actual emergency situation.

**Evacuation:** If the children attending CEC need to evacuate the building of Kingsland Baptist Church because of a fire or natural disaster, the children will be escorted to Nottingham Country Elementary School. If that building is also damaged due to natural disaster, the children will be escorted to the following buildings in this order: St. Peter’s United Methodist Church, Taylor High School or transported to Second Baptist Church on Kingsland Boulevard. CEC has an Emergency Preparedness Plan in place and if you would like to read this plan, please stop by the office for a copy.

## ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND FEES

We are required by law to have certain necessary forms on file before your child can attend classes. These forms include the registration form, health statement signed by your child’s doctor (including immunizations), emergency authorization, field trip and nature walk permission forms and an information form. Additional forms may be required for your child’s age and class and will be included in the registration packet.

**Hours of operation:** CEC follows the KISD school calendar except for the following exceptions: start of school, Christmas holiday, Teacher In-service days, and the last day of school. CEC is in operation Monday-Friday, September through mid-May with most classes scheduled either 9:00 a.m. till noon or 9:00 a.m. till 2:30 p.m. Refer to the CEC brochure for a complete schedule of class choices, days offered, and hours in session. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. till 3:00 p.m. The phone number is 281-579-9232. You may leave a message on the answering machine if calling before or after these hours.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES continued:**

**Late Pick-up charges:** After carpool is over, your child will be brought to the CEC office. There is a late charge of \$10 for children not picked up by 12:05 or 2:35. This amount increases to \$15 for every additional 10 minutes until your child is picked up.

**Registration/Supply Fee** is due upon registering your child. Each year a child attends CEC, they will be required to register. CEC conducts registration in January and the process is on a first-come, first-served basis. The first day of registration is for our current students and their siblings, the second day of registration is for Kingsland Baptist Church members and legacy students, and the last day of registration is open to the public. If you withdraw your child, there are no refunds of the registration fee. If after registration your child does not get placed in a class, your fee will be returned to you.

**Tuition** is due by the tenth day of each month. If payment is not made by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, CEC will deduct your tuition from the account specified on your Tuition Express form. If you have any problems making your payment on time, please contact us and we will be willing to work with you. **Delinquent accounts may cause your child to be dropped from the CEC program (a Financial Agreement was included in your registration packet).** A tuition deposit in the amount of one full month of tuition is due on July 1. This deposit is non-refundable, and will only be applied to your child's May tuition. If your child enrolls after August 1, you may pay half of this deposit the first month your child is enrolled, and half of the deposit the second month your child is enrolled.

**Refunds** or make-up days are not given for absences, school holidays, and emergency closings.

**Returned checks:** Bank charges for checks returned for insufficient funds will be passed on to you. After two returned checks, you will need to make future payments to CEC by cash or money order.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

We plan field trips throughout the year for the 4-year-old classes. These trips will coincide closely with our units of study. Parents are asked to participate by driving and chaperoning the children. You will be informed ahead of time the destination, dates of the trip, and the estimated time of departure and return. This information will also be posted in the CEC office 48 hours prior to the trip. Your help with transportation of your child is necessary if this part of the program is to be successful. All persons in the car must wear a seatbelt (one per child). Smoking is not permitted at any time in the car or on the field trip. Children will not be allowed to ride in the front seat. In compliance with the Texas State Law, all children under 8 years old are required to ride in a safety seat. A waiver will be signed by each parent releasing CEC of all responsibility during transit.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Medical Requirements:** The Health Statement must be signed or stamped by a licensed physician stating that the child has been examined by him/her within the past year and is physically able to participate in activities at CEC. Immunizations must be kept current and records maintained at CEC. If your physician is of the opinion that immunizations would be injurious to the health and well being of the child or a member of the family or household, CEC must have a signed affidavit in your child's file. If immunization conflicts with the beliefs and practices of a recognized church or religious organization of which the parent or guardian is an adherent, the parent or guardian must provide a signed affidavit to CEC, also. CEC staff members are not required to obtain any adult vaccinations.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY continued:**

**Medication:** CEC does not regularly dispense medication. Exceptions are made for:

1. Children with severe allergies who need medication for emergencies only.
2. Children under a doctor's orders who must receive medication on a daily, long-term basis and must be given during CEC hours.

All medication given to a child at CEC must be authorized by a written statement from the physician and/or parent. All medication must be in the original container, indicating the child's name, type and date of prescribed medication, and amount of dosage. Over-the-counter medications will be given according to the labeled directions only. **NO MEDICATIONS CAN BE MEASURED IN ADVANCE OR PUT INTO BABY BOTTLES.** Please do not put any medication in your child's backpack or lunch. Medication must be distributed through the office.

**Diaper Rash Ointment, Sunscreen, and Insect Repellent:** These non-prescription medications can be sent with your child and will be applied according to the product label instructions.

**Illness:** Our intent is to provide a healthy environment for each child who attends CEC. Please notify the school when your child has a contagious disease or condition which includes but is not limited to: chickenpox, measles, mumps, pink eye, current pandemic illnesses, scarlet fever, strep throat, hepatitis, ring worm of the scalp, impetigo, or head lice.

**Pandemic Illness:** During a time of a local or world-wide pandemic, we will follow all recommendations and guidelines from local and state health officials, as well as our state licensing agency. You can stop by the CEC to request a copy or review these policies at any time.

**NOTE: A DOCTOR'S RELEASE MAY BE REQUIRED IN ORDER FOR YOUR CHILD TO RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER HAVING ONE OF THESE DISEASES OR CONDITIONS LISTED UNDER "ILLNESS."** When there has been a child with a contagious disease or condition in the classroom, CEC will notify parents of this situation. Parents will be called to pick up their children immediately when the child is exhibiting one or more of these symptoms:

**Fever:** A temperature of 100 degrees or higher taken by mouth or by ear or 99 degrees taken under the arm. Your child must be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours prior to returning to school.

**Cough and/or Colds:** Yellow or green mucous from the nose and/or constant coughing.

A doctor's release will be required if these symptoms are present but a child is not contagious and according to your physician can attend school.

**Diarrhea:** One severe case. With mild diarrhea, we will wait for the second occurrence before calling the parents. 24 hours must pass since the last occurrence before returning to school.

**Vomiting:** One occurrence. 24 hours must pass since the last occurrence before returning to school.

Texas Health and Human Services states that parents must not allow children to be present at school if any illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in childcare center activities, including outdoor play. Please consider this requirement before sending an unwell child to school.

During the course of a child's school day or when a child returns to school after an illness, if he/she is exhibiting signs or symptoms of an illness, the teacher and/or director will conduct a visual or physical assessment of the child for any health concerns.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY continued:**

**Accidents and Injuries:** CEC staff members make every effort to keep your child safe at preschool. Simple first aid will be administered to minor bumps and scrapes. A minor accident report will also be filled out. The parent will sign the report for our records. For more serious accidents, the parent will be called immediately for discussion and action. In the case of a serious accident or injury, we will make every attempt to contact you immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person you have indicated on the emergency form to make the medical decisions for your child; otherwise, we will either take your child or have your child transported to the nearest hospital which is Houston Methodist West Hospital or Texas Children's Hospital-West Campus. Parents are responsible for any medical bills that may arise from a minor accident.

**Incidents:** CEC staff encourages children to be kind to one another; however, children sometimes hurt their friends. If this happens, an "incident" report will be filled out on the injured child and on the child who hurt their friend. Each parent will sign the report for our records. If the same child continues to hurt their friends, his/her parents will be called in for a conference to discuss a plan of action to change the inappropriate behavior.

**Animals:** Your child's classroom may or may not have a classroom pet depending on the individual preference of the teacher. You will be notified by the teacher if your child's classroom has a pet and if so, what kind. We also have a Pet/Vet Day where we encourage children to bring their pet from home to school. Texas Health and Human Services does have guidelines that we must strictly follow. We will inform you of these guidelines when the event approaches.

**Breastfeeding:** Kingsland Baptist Church has a special room that enables a mother to breastfeed her child in comfort and privacy. C125, the mothers' room, is available to CEC moms and is located to the left of the hallway for the 4 year old and Transition classes.

**Hearing and Vision:** The Texas Department of State Health Services requires children 4 years old or older by September 1 to be screened for possible vision and hearing problems prior to completion of the first semester of enrollment. The testing must be performed between mid-May and mid-December. If your child turned 4 during the summer and you had their hearing and vision screened, you may bring in the screening results to the office to be copied for our records. CEC provides an independent screener to do hearing and vision tests in the fall on our campus at a minimal cost. We will send more information in your child's backpack as the date approaches.

## **NAPTIME**

All classes from 15 month olds through 4 year olds will have a naptime or rest time each day after lunch. The length of naptime will vary according to the age of your child. All children will need to bring a rest mat provided by the parent. Mats should be easy for the child to fold or roll up, be washed or sanitized regularly and easy for the children to carry. We ask that you not send sleeping bags. Many children also like to have a lightweight blanket for cover. Please make sure to write your child's name on these items.

## **NUTRITION**

**Snacks:** On a rotating basis, children will be asked to bring a light, low-sugar snack to share with the class. We are interested in teaching good eating habits. Snack suggestions include crackers, raisins, vegetable sticks, popped popcorn (for two year olds and older), pretzels, or trail mix.

**NO PEANUTS OR PEANUT BUTTER PRODUCTS. PLEASE READ ALL LABELS.**

### **NUTRITION continued:**

Preparing the snack for easy distribution will help the teacher. CEC will provide ice water with the snack. Your child's name will be listed on the class calendar when it is their turn to bring snack, and they will bring home the snack bag the day before their turn. To celebrate your child's birthday, feel free to send a special treat. Serving and eating is easier with the following types of treats: cookies, Rice Krispie treats, doughnuts or doughnut holes, cupcakes (for 3-year-olds and older), or ice cream cups. No cakes or candles.

Please inform your child's teacher and the office if your child has any food allergies or has food restrictions due to religious practices.

Since parents provide snacks and lunches for their children, the Child Enrichment Center is not responsible for the nutritional value of its contents or for meeting the child's daily food needs. Teachers are required to post a daily record (CEC snack calendar) of snacks given to the children in their class. Please talk to the teacher if you would like to review the snack calendar.

**Lunch:** For the 15-month-old and 2-year-old classes, please send sippy cups and finger foods to help teach independent eating habits. If you want your child to wear a bib, please pack it inside the lunch kit. All other children staying during the lunch hour will need a lunch from home. Please do not send any glass containers. Label everything with your child's name. Please send nutritious foods that your child enjoys and is accustomed to eating. Nutritional guidelines will be provided upon request.

### **PARENT HELPERS**

**Volunteers:** Parent volunteers are always welcome at CEC. There are many ways in which to help support your child and our program. Volunteer opportunities include: Room Moms and assistants to help with parties, driving and chaperoning on field trips, and helping with special event days. You will have an opportunity to sign up on "Find Your Room Day" and at other times during the year.

**Substitutes:** CEC is always in need of substitutes to work in the classroom whenever a teacher or assistant is unable to work. If this interests you, please talk with the director about filling out an application and doing the necessary background check. You can specify which days you would be available to work. Substituting is a paid position and is a wonderful way to see what goes on during the day at CEC.

### **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

CEC recognizes the importance of daily indoor and outdoor physical activity. There are many benefits to children that participate in physical activity every day such as; building healthy bones and muscles, improved cardiorespiratory fitness, improved weight control, and reduced symptoms of anxiety and stress. Daily physical activity can also reduce the risk for developing some chronic health conditions such as; heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity, along with many others

Children will be provided with opportunities for both indoor and outdoor play for the designated time during their day as follows:

**15 Month and 2 Year Olds:** One 30 minute outdoor play time

**Children over the age of 3:** One 30 minute outdoor play time between the hours of 9am – 12pm. Children staying from 12pm-2:30pm will have an additional outdoor play time of at least 15 minutes.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY continued:**

Physical activity may take place in the classroom, hallway, playground, or movement classroom. In the event of extreme weather that prohibits outdoor play, teachers will utilize indoor space to provide physical activity.

Types of physical activity may include structured and unstructured activities such as playing on playground equipment (climbing, crawling, hanging, jumping, etc), running/skipping/hopping, kicking or throwing a ball, or playing age-appropriate games with their classmates.

Children should wear clothing that allows them to play freely and safely. Footwear should fit firmly on the foot to allow for safe running and climbing. Tennis shoes are encouraged.

CEC follows these weather guidelines for outdoor play:

**Heat Index:** If the heat index is **97** or greater, outdoor play will be limited to 15 minutes at a time.

**Wind Chill:** If the temperature or wind chill is **42** or below, outdoor play will be limited to 15 minutes at a time. If the temperature or wind chill is below **40**, classes will not go outside at all.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES**

CEC contracts with a photographer three times a year to take pictures of the children. Group pictures will be taken in the Spring and individual pictures will be taken in the Fall and then again in the Spring. Parents are under no obligation to purchase the pictures. If you prefer that your child not have his/her picture taken, please notify both the teacher and the CEC office in writing prior to picture day. Due to the large number of children being photographed, CEC can only allow parents to bring siblings for photographs in the morning before the first scheduled group. The parent will be responsible for taking their children to the photographer and then to class. If you plan to come early to get your child's picture done, please call the CEC office to inform us of this arrangement.

## **SECURITY**

Your child's security is our first priority. The items listed below are security measures the Child Enrichment Center will have in place (please see the map on Page 11). After carpool the following doors will be locked, and you will need to check in at the CEC office:

1. The C-Wing entrance into the 4's and Transition area will be locked once carpool is complete.
2. The L-Wing entrance into the 15 Months, 2's and 3's area will be locked once carpool is complete.
3. The security doors near L182 will remain locked throughout the day.
4. All exterior doors will be locked during the school day.  
\*If you arrive during this time, you will need to ring the bell and be buzzed in to check in at the CEC office.



## **T-SHIRTS**

CEC T-shirts will be available for you to order in September. The children may wear the CEC T-shirt anytime, but they are especially important to wear on field trips. It really helps the teachers keep the group together when they are all wearing the same shirt. In addition, the shirts are printed with the CEC phone number in case a child is separated from the group. We work to keep the cost of the shirts affordable.

## **TEXAS LICENSING RULES & REGULATIONS**

CEC's license is issued by the Texas Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing. If you would like to review a copy of the Minimum Standards, you may either borrow a copy from our office or view it on the internet at [www.hhs.texas.gov](http://www.hhs.texas.gov). You may also contact the licensing office at 713-447-3438 or write to the Child Care Licensing, 1330 E 40<sup>th</sup> St. Houston, TX 77022. CEC's most recent inspection report is available for your review in the preschool office.

Information available upon request: The following information will be provided by request to any parent without retaliation: Written records about your child, current inspection report and access to our center's compliance history, center's policies and procedures, staff training records and in-house curriculum

Court orders and visitation policy: CEC will comply with any valid court order signed by a judge that prevents a parent from visiting or removing a child from our care.

Child Protective Services: Please see pages 10-11 of the CEC Parent Handbook to review our Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect Policy.

Consumer Product Safety Commission: All products that CPSC has recalled are posted in the CEC office for your review. CEC makes a conscious effort to review the recall notices and remove any unsafe products.

Gang-Free Zone: Texas House Bill 2086, Section 42.064, of the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature designated certain areas around child-care centers as gang-free zones. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our program is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

CEC does not provide transportation to and from school or field trips.

## **VISITORS**

Parents are welcome to come observe their child at CEC anytime during our hours of operation. We ask that you respect our security measures and come by the office to sign in, receive a security sticker and then sign out upon departure.

## **WATER PLAY**

The children at CEC will not be swimming in or using wading pools of any kind. Water play days will involve discovery tables and buckets.

## **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY**

State law requires all staff members to report suspected child physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect. Any staff member who suspects child abuse or neglect must immediately report it to directly to Childcare Licensing and also to our Director. Once the case has been reported, Department of Family and Protective Services will investigate and notify the school. The DFPS Statewide hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE:**

1. All employees must report any suspected child abuse cases to the Child Abuse Hotline. A person may not make the independent determination of whether a report is necessary or not. Teachers must also report any suspected abuse to the Director.
2. The Director must send a written report of suspected child abuse to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) of the alleged abuse within 48 hours.
3. When reporting suspected cases of child abuse, you must include the following information:  
Name and age of child, child's present location, type and extent of abuse, and the name and title of the person making the report.
4. Due to the confidential nature of such reports, no information concerning the incident can be shared with other staff members or parents.

### Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children requires:

#### **STAFF TRAINING**

CHILD ENRICHMENT CENTER will provide training for all staff on the identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect each program year. The director will provide this training for new staff at an orientation within 7 days of their hire date. Any new staff hired during the school year will also receive training that will be documented in the employee's file. All employees must complete at least one clock hour of annual training from the Department of Family and Protective Services Website:  
<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Reporting> or other source including but not limited to face to face and /online training.

#### **PARENT EDUCATION**

The Child Abuse and Neglect Policy will be given to all parents in the CEC Parent Handbook. Parents will be informed of available community resources from the Department of Family and Protective Services Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP Program).

The CBCAP program makes parents aware of prevention services in their communities and encourages them to use them. It also strengthens community and parental involvement in child abuse prevention efforts. CBCAP funds a variety of contracts with community-based organizations to provide child abuse and neglect prevention services. These include Respite and Parent Education, Fatherhood and Leadership for Effective Parenting, Multidisciplinary Approach to Prevention Services, Family Support program, as well as various special initiatives. These includes the Help for Parents, Hope for Kids campaign, which reaches out to parents with advertising and inspirational testimonials, and gives them a website: <http://www.helpandhope.org> (to connect them with prevention and support services statewide).

## HOW DO I KNOW IF IT'S ABUSE OR NEGLECT?

DFPS uses definitions of abuse and neglect found in the Texas Family Code (TFC):

<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.261.htm>

DFPS defines abuse and neglect as the following acts or omissions by a person:

Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including any injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given. This does not include an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm.

Sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of young child or children under Section 21.02, Penal Code, indecency with a child under Section 21.11, Penal Code, sexual assault under Section 22.011, Penal Code or aggravated sexual assault under 22.021, Penal Code.

Mental or emotional injury to a child that results in observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning.

Neglect includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

Placing a child in or failing to remove a child from a situation in which a reasonable person would realize requires judgment or actions beyond the child's level of maturity, physical condition, or mental abilities and that results in bodily injury or a substantial risk of immediate harm to the child.

Failing to seek, obtain, or follow through with medical care for a child with the failure resulting in or presenting a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or bodily injury or with the failure resulting in an observable and material impairment to the growth, development, or functioning of a child.

The failure to provide a child with food, clothing, or shelter necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

What if I'm not sure it's if it's neglect?

While it would be ideal to have a clear-cut guide that would determine whether any given situation constitutes abuse or neglect, there are many factors that determine whether a situation warrants an investigation. When in doubt, always err on the side of the child's safety by making a phone or Internet report to the Texas Abuse Hotline.



