



Early Learning Programs Parent Handbook 2023-24

Purpose

To serve God and the community by
"Growing children for a life rooted in faith"

Our Mission

Kinsmen Children's Academy provides a safe, loving, and learning environment that inspires a foundation of faith for families.

Our Vision

We are preparing God's children to be Christ-like examples in their community and the world.

Kinsmen Children's Academy is an integral part of the educational ministry and community outreach of Kinsmen Lutheran Church. It currently consists of an Early Learning Program (7 AM to 6 PM) and a Before and After School Care Program (6:30 AM to 6:30 PM) open Monday through Friday. It is our vision to help each child grow in the following areas:

Spiritually

- * To help each child build a personal, trusting, loving relationship with God.
- * To help each child experience inspiring worship and understand God's forgiveness and unchanging love.
- * To help each child develop a thankful attitude for all of our blessings and to share grace with others.

Physically

- *To help each child develop large and small motor skills.
- *To help each child learn self-control in both quiet and active situations.

Emotionally

- *To help each child become independent.
- *To help each child develop a positive self-image and attitude.
- *To help each child understand their own feelings and respect those of others.

Socially

- *To help each child develop communication skills for problem-solving.
- *To help each child to experience family through appropriate social skills and group activities.

Intellectually

- *To help each child to explore, experiment, and question through their play.
- *To help each child develop and express their own creativity.
- *To help each child increase his or her language and communication skills.
- *To help each child discover and encourage his own love for learning.

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Absences and Withdrawals

When your child is absent due to illness, please notify the Director and teacher by email or using the Procure app.

A 30 day written notice is required to notify the Director if you wish to withdraw your child from the program or change their schedule without extra fees.

Animals

Animals are not permitted on Kinsmen Children's Academy's campus except for special in-house field trips. If we choose to have animals on the premises and/or on field trips, we will

- (1) Notify parents in writing when animals are or will be present;
- (2) Ensure the animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions;
- (3) Ensure that children do not handle any animal that shows signs of illness, such as lethargy or diarrhea; and
- (4) Ensure that caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with an animal and items used by an animal, such as water bowls, food bowls, and cages.

Arrival

All students must be signed in and out by a parent/guardian through the Procure App.

Before Care begins at 7 AM. Please respect our facilities and our staff and do not arrive or try to enter the facility before this time. Our staff arrive early to prepare for the day, and will greet you when our doors open at 7 AM.

Classes begin promptly at 9 AM. Please arrive on time. If you will be late, please inform our staff.

Please do not attempt to enter the classroom after school has begun. It is very disruptive to the class when a child arrives late. Likewise, a child may feel uncomfortable arriving late, realizing everyone else has become involved in the day's activities.

Breastfeeding

Kinsmen Children's Academy fully supports and encourages breastfeeding. Please let us know if you desire to breastfeed your child during the day, and we will make a plan together.

Birthdays

Birthdays are fun milestones to celebrate with young children, and we celebrate during morning snack in our program. Please notify your child's teacher or the Director if your child would like to celebrate with your child's class at least one week in advance. Individual cookies, brownies, or cupcakes are suggested and must be store bought. Please do not send any foods containing nuts because of allergies. Please do not send cakes, party favors, candles, or games to the classroom.

Birthday invitations for parties outside of the school are solely the responsibility of the family. Invitations may be distributed at school only if you are inviting the entire class, otherwise please do not send birthday invitations to school. We will not provide email or physical addresses of classmates for invitations.

Due to our sensitive fire alarm system, we do not allow any birthday candles.

Calendar and Closings

Students will receive a calendar at the beginning of the year. **In the event of a weather emergency, KCA will always follow Klein ISD's closing policy.** School closings are televised on local news program and announced on radio stations. KCA will also send a Procure message to all enrolled students. With the discretion of the Director, school may be cancelled for other emergency reasons. Should this occur, every effort will be made to contact each student's family via the Procure app.

Car Seats

The law requires that all children under 8 years old, unless 4'9" tall, to be in an appropriate car safety seat. Please make sure children are strapped in until removed from the car. Constables patrol the neighborhood and our parking lot and perform random car seat checks. We do not assume any liability for children whose parents do not follow this policy.

Chapel

Kinsmen Children's Academy is an intentional ministry of Kinsmen Lutheran Church. Children enrolled in the 3- and 4-year-old preschool gather for a time of worship and learning each week. During chapel, through songs, Bible stories, and prayer we focus on God's amazing love for us and children are encouraged to love others in God's name.

Children with Special Needs

Our school environment is designed to accommodate a wide range of learning styles and developmental levels. However, KCA functions as a general educational facility, and our teachers are not trained or certified in the areas of special needs with regard to learning, development, or behavior. Our state licensing regulations limit the number of children who can be supervised by a teacher. If your child has needs that require constant individual attention, that may limit our ability to legally and safely provide the specialized learning environment that your child may need. We ask in such cases that you seek outside help for your child's specialized needs.

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable, washable clothing that allows for easy diaper changing or restroom use (no rompers, overalls, belts, etc.). Safe shoes, such as tennis shoes, are recommended particularly when children are on the playground and using climbing equipment. Sandals, flip-flops, and slip on shoes like Crocs are not safe when climbing. **Please label all articles brought from home with your child's first and last name.** Also, please provide an extra change of clothes (including socks and underwear) in a backpack for your child for all ages.

Communication

Contact between the home and school is very important. We are interested in knowing facts related to your child's well-being. Please keep us informed of such things as the birth of a new baby, severe illness in your family, the death of a loved one or pet, a change in family status or anything that can cause stress in your child's life.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact your child's teacher and/or the Director. You can contact your child's teacher using the Procure app. Teachers are available to discuss any concerns you may have about your child at any time during the school year. Please let the teacher know, and they will schedule a time with you to discuss your concerns. Please do not confer with the teacher during pick up or drop off.

The Procure app is the only appropriate way to contact teachers. Parents and teachers should not exchange personal telephone numbers. All calls made to parents will be on the Kinsmen Children's Academy phone due to safety concerns.

KCA prohibits the solicitation of products or services on the campus by parents, children, or staff members. KCA prohibits staff members from providing off campus services for any parent or child affiliated with KCA. These services specifically include babysitting, tutoring, and driving children other than their own to or from school. Outside services to parents can cause favoritism in the classroom with families and children. If the teacher is able to avoid favoritism, it is often difficult for the child to understand why he or she is not receiving the same attention at school that is received at home. This situation is not best for the child.

If KCA staff members provide tutoring or babysitting services, they will be violating a condition of their employment agreement, which could result in the loss of their position. Parents' solicitation of services to any staff member could result in dismissal of the child from the school.

Discipline & Removal from Program

Our goal is to create an atmosphere that encourages self discipline and good behavior. When discipline is necessary, we will redirect the child, explain the desired behavior, give incentives for positive behavior, and use time outs as a final step. Time outs are no longer than one minute per year of age of the child. No corporal punishment is allowed at any time. If the child still exhibits the bad behavior, a note will be sent home to the parents. Persistent problems will result in a conference with the parents and Director. If the problem cannot be resolved, the Director will give the parents a notice of dismissal. The formal dismissal notice allows the parents two weeks to make other child care arrangements.

From the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:
§746.2803 What methods of discipline and guidance may a caregiver use?

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding;
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control; and
- A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:
 - Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 - Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
 - Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
 - Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

Dismissal

Please do not leave your car unattended in the drive through lane for any reason, and always lock your car and hide your valuables.

We must have written permission to release your child to anyone other than those listed on your enrollment form. You may have as many people listed on your form as necessary. Only the primary caregiver may change the list. We will ask for picture identification until a relationship is established with our staff. If you have a regular carpool, please indicate it on your enrollment form so that we can add the appropriate people to the Procure app. Please make sure your child's teacher knows who will be picking up your child each day.

Emergency Preparedness

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Severe weather drills, shelter in place drills, and lock down drills are conducted quarterly. If there is an emergency on campus where the children need to be evacuated to a different location, it is the first responsibility of staff to safely move the children. There is a relocation plan located near the door in each classroom.

It is very important for parents to keep all contact information up to date on themselves, emergency contacts, and those authorized to pick up their children.

Field Trips

Field trips, which are educational and fun, are planned in relation to our studies and seasonal activities. Preschool parents will be notified in advance of the time, date, and location of any planned trips. No provisions are made for the care of any child not participating in a field trip, and therefore, those not participating must not come to school on field trip days. If your child is 3-years-old or younger at the time of the field trip, they must ride in their car seat on the bus. Children who are 4-years-old and older do not require a car seat on the bus.

Forms and Enrollment

Both sides and all boxes must be completed by a parent along with medical information and physician signature, and completed forms must be returned before the first day of class. Any immunizations received throughout the year must be updated in our files as soon as possible. If updates to this document are necessary throughout the school year, parents will be emailed a copy and asked to return the signed acknowledgement form.

All immunization dates must be complete and up to date. Allergies, serious illnesses, and any other information which staff should be aware of must be listed for the health and safety of your child. In addition, an Action Plan for Emergency Care must be completed by the doctor and must accompany any allergies or medication.

Kinsmen Children's Academy prefers NOT to get involved with custody disputes. KCA will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. Per state law, in the absence of a court order, both parents have equal rights. With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents' 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, KCA has the right to terminate care.

Authorization for emergency care must be given by the parent and filed with the Director upon enrollment.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Vision and Hearing Screening will be available for your convenience near the beginning of the school year for children 4-years-old and older as of September 1. A state registered and state certified professional will come to the school and administer the test for a nominal fee. Parents are also welcome to have the screening done by their own physician and provide proper documentation to the school. Screening must be done within 120 days of admission.

Illness and injury

A child should not be brought to school if they have experienced or are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees F or higher in the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours
- Taking antibiotics for less than 24 hours
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Constant cough
- Sad, fussy, cranky, or generally not themselves
- Contagious skin rash
- Head lice or nits
- Any symptoms of possible communicable disease

When in doubt, keep your child home where your child is secure, comfortable, and under your supervision. Parents will be contacted during the day to pickup your child if your child begins to exhibit any signs of illness, and you have 30 minutes to pickup your child. Please notify the Director as soon as possible if your child contracts any communicable disease (Covid-19, chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, fifth disease, roseola, head lice, ring worm, etc.) so that other parents may be told to watch for symptoms of the illness. We will not disclose your child's name when notifying other parents.

If your child is not well enough to go outdoors to play, please keep your child at home. We do not have other provisions for care of the child while the teacher and other children are outside, and outdoor time is an required part of our program.

In case of accidental injury where we deem parent contact necessary, we will make an immediate attempt to reach a parent using the phone numbers you have provided. If we cannot reach you, we will call the child's physician. In case of emergency, we will call 911. You will be expected to assume all responsibility for any resultant expense.

It is for your child's benefit that you keep the school informed of any changes in employment, phone numbers, physicians and other pertinent information. In all emergencies, the school has permission to take such reasonable measure as are necessary, in the judgment of the staff, for the welfare and safety of the child. The school will exercise reasonable care and judgment in all matters related to the child's welfare and safety.

Infants (Less than 12 months old)

For infants in our program, we will give you a copy of our **Infant Safe Sleep Policies**. You will need to sign it and return the form to us before your child attends our program.

Bottles must be pre-filled and labeled with first name and last initial in our infant rooms.

Late Pickup

All children are to be picked up by their dismissal time indicated on their admission application. Any child left in the classroom 10 minutes later than dismissal will be taken to the Director's office to wait for their parent. For the 1 PM and 2:30 PM pickup times, a late fee of \$2 a minute for the first 10 minutes, and \$5 a minute fee after that will be charged beginning after the first 10 minutes. For the 6 PM pickup time, late pickups are charged \$25 for the first minute and \$2 per minute for the first 10 minutes after that. After 6:10 PM, there is a \$5 charger per minute after that. There is no 10 minute grace period at the 6 PM pick up time. **Three or more pick ups after the dismissal time may result in dismissal from the program.**

We are licensed to care for children between the hours of 7 AM and 6 PM, so please make every effort to pickup your child before 6 PM. If you have not picked up your child by 6:30 PM, we are legally obligated to call Child Protective Services.

Licensing Information and Minimum Standards

Kinsmen Children's Academy is licensed by The Texas Department of Health and Human Services, 1330 East 40th Street, Houston, TX 77022 (713) 692-3236 or visit dfps.state.tx.us
Mailing address: PO Box 16017, Houston, TX 77222-6017, Mail Code 182-6

If you feel the need to report suspected abuse or neglect please call:
Child Care Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-5400.

You can view a copy of our latest licensing report here: https://childcare.hhs.texas.gov/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilityDetails.asp?ptype=DC&fid=101182&resCareFlag=F

Kinsmen Children's Academy is a licensed child care facility by the State of Texas. We follow Minimum Standards for the safety and supervision of children. A copy of these standards can be found here: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/protective-services-providers/child-care-regulation/minimum-standards>

Medication

If a child needs a prescribed medicine during the day, a written and dated request that is signed by a licensed physician shall be given to the Director. The original label and container with the physician's instructions are required.

Non-prescription medicine must be in the original container labeled with the child's name. Sunscreen and bug spray are considered medication by Child Care Licensing. A note from the parent/guardian must be included with the instructions, date, and signature. Please send a medicine spoon for liquid medicine. For everyone's safety, medicine needs to be handed directly to the teacher or Director with appropriate documentation and not placed in your child's backpack, lunchbox, or directly in their sippy cup.

Pictures

Each year we offer an opportunity for individual school pictures. Arrangements are made with a professional photographer to come to the school. These opportunities are for children enrolled in KCA and do not include siblings or family members not currently enrolled.

Pictures of children play a large role in our program. Parents are asked to sign a media release form so we may take pictures of your child to use in school publications, classroom crafts, and other fun projects.

Special events for your family are held throughout the year. We encourage you and your family to participate. Attendance at these functions provides families and friends the opportunity to get to know the teacher and meet other classmates and parents.

In consideration of families that may not wish to have their child's images on the internet, we ask that you do not upload photographs and videos of activities at the school that may include children other than your own. These pictures include those taken yourself at a school activity and those shared with you through the Procure app.

Potty Training

All Preschool children (3- and 4-year-olds) must be potty trained prior to the beginning of the school year. This means that children are able to tell a teacher that they need to use the restroom and that they are able to follow restroom procedures. Teachers will be available to assist children with any special circumstances, but children are expected to use the restroom independently. Pull-ups are not allowed in the 3- and 4-year-old classrooms.

Registration Policies

KCA is open to all Kinsmen members and current enrollees first, and then open to the public. A child must be the appropriate age on or before September 1 of that school year to register for this program.

A waiting list will be established for each class when all spaces are filled. Kinsmen members wishing to register after all spaces are filled will be moved to the top of the waiting list. All others will remain in the order in which they were placed on the list.

There is an annual \$150 supply fee to cover the cost of supplies used throughout the school year. The \$150 registration fee secures your child's placement in the class, is non-refundable, and must be paid each school year.

Safety

For the safety of everyone, children of any age should not be left alone in the car or unattended for any length of time on Kinsmen property.

Weapons of any kind are not allowed on our campus. We are a tobacco free campus.

Any item found in a child's backpack/diaper bag that is deemed to be unsafe will be kept in the Director's office until a parent/guardian can claim it.

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 Kinsmen Children's Academy. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

Staff Education

The most important asset of a school is the quality teachers. All staff members are experienced in working with young children and attend at least 24 hours of continuing education throughout the year relative to the developmental and education needs of young children. Each teacher is also trained in first aid and CPR, fingerprinted, and background checked regularly.

Teachers are paid a fair wage depending on their education, work experience, and time at KCA. Their salary and details of employment are between the Director and the teacher.

Student Lunches

Children should bring a nutritious lunch (including refillable water bottle/sippy cup) to school each day. We do not have the facilities to refrigerate or heat lunches, so you will need to have a cold pack or thermos as needed. Please make sure to include all necessary utensils. If you would like suggestions for age-appropriate, nutritious lunches please contact the Director. Please label all lunchboxes, cups, thermoses, and utensils.

Transportation

Transportation is not provided regularly for our Early Learning Program, it is only provided for field trips with appropriate notification to parents. Transportation for a medical emergency will be provided by calling 911. In case of emergency evacuation from our center, we will walk the children to our designated safe place. More details are given in each classroom.

Toys from home

Children are discouraged from bringing toys and/or books from home, as these items may be lost or broken. Special "Show and Tell" occasions are an exception. KCA staff makes every effort to keep up with your child's personal items. You must label all items with your child's name. KCA assumes no responsibility for items brought from home.

Tuition

Tuition is posted on the 20th day of each month for the following month. Payment may be made by credit/debit card through the Procure app. Tuition paid on or after the 1st of the month will be considered late and a \$25 late fee will be assessed. After that there is a weekly late fee of \$25. Your child may be dropped from the program and your child's space in our program will be filled with a child on the waiting list if tuition is not paid on time. Need-based scholarships are available. Please contact the Director for more information and for an application.

Any checks returned by the bank are assessed a \$25 fee and must be picked up in the office and replaced with cash or a money order. If this continues to happen, your child may be dismissed from the program.

There are no refunds for days missed due to illness, vacation, or emergency issues.

If for any reason you require a refund from Kinsmen Children's Academy, your request must be submitted in writing within the same school year that the overage occurred, or within 6 months that the overage occurs, whichever comes first.

Visitors

Parents are welcome to visit the school during our regular operating hours. We encourage you to become familiar with our program and your child's teachers. When possible, we do request that you make an appointment in advance by contacting the Director to visit in the classroom so that the impact to the classroom is minimal. In addition, parents are invited and encouraged several times during the year to attend special programs and events. However, please be aware that with our younger students, visits from parents can be disruptive to their daily routine and frequently make the separation time more difficult. For safety and security, we ask that all visitors check in at the office with proper identification.

Wading Pools and Sprinkler Play

Children in our program will not use swimming pools on our campus or on a field trip. Wading/splashing pools (two feet of water or less) at Kinsmen Children's Academy will be:

- (1) Stored out of children's reach when not in use;
- (2) Drained at least daily and sanitized; and
- (3) Stored so they do not hold water.

When sprinklers are used, we will a) ensure that no child uses sprinkler equipment on or near a hard, slippery surface, such as a concrete driveway, sidewalk, or patio.

- (b) not leave a child alone with the sprinkler equipment.
- (c) store sprinkler equipment and water hoses out of the reach of children when not in use.
- (d) maintain our sprinkler play area according to manufacturer's instructions.



Early Learning Programs
Parent Handbook Acknowledgement
2023-24
(updated 8/7/2023)

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Kinsmen Children's Academy Early Learning Parent Handbook. I understand that it contains important information on the policies and procedures of this program. I have familiarized myself with the material and I understand the contents.

I have received the handbook and I understand it is my responsibility to read and comply with its contents.

Child's Name (please print)

Parent Signature

Date