



# Parent Handbook

**Mission Statement:** We strive to provide a compassionate and safe learning environment for all the children at Discovery Barn Learning Center.

**Our Philosophy:** At Discovery Barn, we strive for excellence in care and education for the children at our center. Our goal is to build a strong early education foundation through a variety of experiences involving creative expression, independent learning, social skills, language skills, and fine and gross motor skills. Each child will develop positive attitudes about self, school and learning. We more than meet their basic needs, including nutritious meals, clean and hygienic facilities, routine, rituals and consistency. Both the children and their families are central to everything we do, and the input of families is essential to our achieving and maintaining excellence. Discovery Barn Learning Center appreciates the opportunity to be a part of your child's early education experience.

We are open Monday-Friday, 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. We are open 12 months a year.

We observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (two days), Christmas (three days). Holiday closures are subject to change.

Every child needs to be present by 9:30 a.m. unless you have a doctor's excuse. Drop off is not allowed during nap time. If your child will be late, please call the center so we will be prepared for the correct ratio of children.

**Weekly Tuition Rates:**

Infants (6 weeks-18 months) \$160, Toddlers (18 months – 3 years) \$140, Pre-K (3-5 years) \$130

School Age: \$80 AM & PM, \$70 PM only, \$25 AM only, Summer Weeks \$130

There is a discount for siblings of \$5 per child each week .

**Other fees:**

We require a \$45 registration fee when your child is enrolled. We also require a \$45 re-enrollment fee due each fall. During the summer we have special activities, special guests, special snacks and t-shirts that will require a \$45 fee per child.

We close at 6 p.m. There is a late fee of \$2 per minute per child that is payable immediately to the teachers on duty. Excessive late pickups will result in loss of enrollment.

Checks returned for any reason will include a \$50 handling fee. If we receive two returned checks from the same person, checks will no longer be accepted.

Tuition refunds are unavailable. If tuition is not received by Friday of each week, a **\$20 late fee** will be added each week that tuition is not paid. Failure to pay two consecutive weeks will result in loss of enrollment.

**Parents must give two weeks written notification before withdrawing their child from care or pay two full weeks of tuition.**

**Parent Portal:** Every family will have an OnCare account in which parents will be able to monitor tuition, make online payments and update family information including address and phone numbers. An email will be sent that allows you to create an account.

**Parent Communication:** Communication is very important to our center and we use many forms to keep parents up to date. Monthly newsletters will be sent home, signs are posted throughout the center. Also, email and Facebook are used for reminders and to post activities. HiMama is used for daily infant reports. Parents can contact the director or any other staff member by phone, email or in person during operation hours. Our center's policies are reviewed annually, updated when necessary and parents are notified in writing of the changes.

Parent conferences will be offered twice a year, in the fall and spring. These conferences may be in person or over the phone and will include the student's progress, expectations and goals.

**Social Media:** Parents should not use social media to communicate with teachers or other staff. Please use the school phone or directors email to discuss topics related to the center or to your child.

**Family Participation:** Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at our center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers or coordinate special events. Our center will also host special activities throughout the year such as class parties, events and Thanksgiving feast in which parents and families will be welcomed. We have an open-door policy and welcome visits at any time of day. It is important to note that young children may interpret a parent's arrival as time to go home. If a parent appears and does not take the child with them, the child often will become upset. Please consider this as you plan your visits.

**Curriculum:** Discovery Barn uses a curriculum that is original to our center and evolves with the needs and changes of preschool education. The goal of each class is to encourage age-appropriate milestones and develop academic skills. Our lesson plans are built around both teacher and child-initiated activities that are developmentally appropriate and designed to meet the needs of the whole child: physically, emotionally, socially, creatively and cognitively. When children graduate from our preschool program, our goal is that they are prepared to master all aspects of kindergarten.

**Physical Activity/Outdoor Play:** Regular physical activity promotes health and fitness as well as has brain health benefits for children, including improved cognition. Physical activity is a regular part of our daily routine and may include dancing, running, tricycles, climbing, swinging, crawling, etc. Children should be prepared to play outside twice in the morning and twice after lunch for 20-30-minute intervals. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. We are aware there can be exceptions to this rule and will require a doctor's note that describes the physical limits of the child.

**Pools/Sprinklers:** Summer activities may include sprinklers and/or water tables. Wading pools or swimming pools are not used at our center. School-age children take field trips to lifeguard pools but are not allowed on diving boards or slides.

**Screen Time:** Screen time is prohibited for children under the age of two years. Screen time for children over two years does not exceed two hours per day. The three-and-four-year pre-k classrooms watch 30 minutes of television in the afternoon and during the last 30 minutes of each day. Our center does not allow children of any age to bring personal electronic devices, including phones, tablets or watches, to the center.

**Notification of Absence:** Parents are required to inform the center by 8:30 a.m. if a child will be absent. This will enable the center to effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the teacher effectively plan for the day. If your child is ill, please notify the center about the nature of the illness. Communicable disease information will be shared with staff and parents as needed to prevent spread of the disease. We will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.

**Sign-in and out:** Please make sure to sign your child in and out daily. This is very important for teachers to monitor students and is also required by the DFPS/HHS. We are not responsible for your child before he/she is signed in or after he/she is signed out. A parent or guardian must go inside to sign your child in or out. Children will only be released to persons listed on the enrollment form or someone the parent has verbally approved. A valid ID will be needed to release the child to any person we have not met.

Please remember teachers are on duty during pick-up and must supervise all the children in care. Brief discussions about a child's behavior or concerns are acceptable. The director can schedule conferences for more in-depth discussions.

**Immediate Access:** In cases where custody is subject to a court order, we must be provided with a copy of the order. In the absence of a court order, both parents will have equal access to their child as stipulated by law.

**Allergies:** If your child suffers from any type of allergy, we will need an individualized plan prepared by the child's physician. This plan is shared with all staff members and posted in all necessary areas. All staff members are trained annually about food allergies and all the precautions to follow to ensure children are protected from an allergic reaction. When a child that is enrolled suffers from a severe food allergy, the center will ban the particular food from the entire center.

**Nutrition Policies:** Our center serves breakfast, morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. Menus follow the Health and Human Service standards and include nutritious meals and snacks. Liquids and food hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach of children. Food that is brought into the program to be shared is commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by health officials. Healthy snacks are available for school age children as they arrive.

**Lunches from Home:** When you provide a lunch from home, you must ensure the safety of food brought from home including maintaining the proper temperature. Please provide meals with adequate nutritional value. Sugary drinks, sodas, candy bars, other candy and large desserts are discouraged. Please see our parent resource area for information of nutritious meals and eating habits. Milk, fruit and vegetables are available for children who bring lunches from home.

**Infant Meals:** Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a monthly basis or as the child's feeding requirements change. A daily report will be provided for each child detailing the child's feeding, diapering and sleeping.

Breastfeeding is welcomed and nursing mothers will be provided with accommodations that sufficiently meet their needs. Our parent resource center provides a compilation of breastfeeding education and support resources from our community.

**Nap mats and blankets:** Kinder nap mats are not made very well and tear easily. The mats will last much longer with a cover of some sort. A king-size pillowcase is affordable and works great as a cover for kinder mats. Another suggestion is to sew two large towels together. All nap items need to be taken home Friday to be washed and sanitized. Full-size pillows, sleeping bags or oversized sleeping mats are NOT allowed.

**Immunizations and Records:** Children cannot attend if current immunization records are not on file. If your child is more than six months behind on immunizations, they will lose their enrollment. Every child must have the following in their file: enrollment form, signed operational policy/handbook, immunization record, health statement and an allergy form if needed. Children 4 years of age also are required to have vision and hearing screening on file. Brazoria County does not require children enrolled to have TB test.

Staff and/or teachers are not required to have vaccinations including the flu and TB test.

**Medication:** A medicine form with a parent's signature is required to administer medicine. The form includes name of medication, dosage and dates. Medicine must be in its original container labeled with the child's name. Prescriptions must have a current date and correct name. Over-the-counter medication must be age appropriate or include a doctor's note. We cannot exceed a recommended dosage without a doctor's note.

**Illness and Fever:** Children with a temperature of 100 degrees or more will not be allowed to attend. Children with severe symptoms such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, excessive coughing, diarrhea, vomiting, unidentified rash, mouth sores, behavior changes or any other compromising health problem will also need to leave the center. Children must be picked up within an hour after the parent is contacted. Children must be free from fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours without medication before returning to care. When necessary, parents will be notified that a communicable disease is present. Head lice will also result in a child being sent home until the lice and nits are treated and removed.

**Medical Emergency:** If necessary, staff members will contact emergency medical services or transport the child to the ER, provide first aid or CPR and/or contact the physician identified in the child's record. The parent will be contacted as soon as the emergency allows.

**Discipline:** Our staff is trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance. Our staff will never use corporal punishment or forms of humiliation. The steps we will take to encourage good behavior are:

- Praise and encourage good behavior instead of focusing on unacceptable behavior.
- Remind a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear instructions.
- Redirect unacceptable behavior and model the correct behavior.
- After several attempts to redirect, timeout will be used (1 minute per age in years).
- Parents are notified when a behavior is becoming a habit or causing harm.
- When a child is harming classmates or disrupting learning time, they may be removed from the classroom for timeout so the director can go over the expectations and proper behavior.
- Parents will be contacted by phone and/or a parent communication form if the procedures above are not correcting the unacceptable behavior.
- Positive cooperation from the family is required when dealing with disruptive behavior.
- Discovery Barn reserves the right to terminate care for discipline problems at any time.

**Biting:** Biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2½-year-old range. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their child may be bit or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when biting incidents occur. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Parents will be notified of the incident. The staff may not discuss the identity of the children involved since this information is considered confidential. Uncooperative parents will have their child's services terminated.

Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. Discipline procedures listed above will be used to correct the behavior. Children in the older age groups whose biting becomes a habit will be withdrawn from care.

**Potty training:** We will make every effort to help potty train your child. Our suggestion is to begin with a pull-up or underwear at home during the weekend or when a parent can offer one-on-one attention to get the child comfortable with using the potty. If the child has a successful weekend and is making progress, then send the child in a pull-up or underwear and three changes of clothes (including socks and shoes). Once the child has started making progress at school then we suggest using underwear full time. \*\*Please send the type of pull-ups that have fastening tabs so the child does not have to undress in order to be changed. \*\*

**Clothing:** Children are required to dress in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, clothing. Overalls or clothing with difficult closures are prohibited due to challenges these types of clothing present during toileting. Coats must be provided in winter months. Children also must have a seasonably and size appropriate change of clothing at the center at all times. Please label all personal items, especially winter coats/jackets. Children are not allowed to wear jewelry or open-backed shoes (no flip-flops).

**Transportation:** School-age children will walk to Barrow Elementary School or use the school van if the weather is bad. Kindergarten and first grade students will be bused to Wild Peach Elementary School by a CBISD transportation school bus. During summer field trips, the DBLC vans will be used to transport the children. Our insurance company screens each driver and each staff member is trained annually on safe driving and transportation measures. Vehicles must be in safe operation condition and drivers shall have a current Texas Drivers License. Children will not be allowed on field trips unless a parent or guardian has signed permission forms and our transportation policy.

**Emergency Procedures:** A complete emergency plan can be found in the office. Emergency drills are practiced monthly. If we will be evacuated or relocated, children will be taken to Discovery Days, 1320 W. Brazos Ave, West Columbia, 979-345-3333 or to First Baptist Church, 101 San Bernard St, Brazoria, 979-798-2340. The school van and/or employee vehicles will be used for transport. Sign-in sheets and classroom notebooks will be used to account for students and to contact parents. The director or assistant director will be responsible for contacting authorities and assisting staff in contacting parents.

We will follow CBISD's bad weather policies for extreme weather closures. We will not provide shelter or transportation due to local emergencies. Parents will be notified as soon as possible about closure or early dismissal.

**Reporting Abuse:** Our staff is annually trained to recognize signs of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and/or neglect. Staff members are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to CPS for further review.

- Wilson Pest Control conducts quarterly pest control treatments. (979-849-0955)
- Any area within 1,000 feet of Discovery Barn Learning Center is a Gang Free Zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.
- Discovery Barn regularly checks CPSC website to ensure we have no recalled toys.
- There is a copy of current minimum standards, and most recent inspection report in the office.

**Child Care Licensing Office:**

209 E. Mulberry, Angleton, Texas 77515, 979-888-8423, [www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us)  
Child abuse hotline: 1-800-252-5400                      Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

**Discovery Barn Learning Center**

202 Gaines Street  
Brazoria, Texas 77422

Phone: 979-798-5696

Fax: 979-798-5676

[www.discoverybarn.biz](http://www.discoverybarn.biz)

Shae Horak, Owner  
Carolyn Helm, Director

[shae@discoverydays.biz](mailto:shae@discoverydays.biz)  
[director@discoverybarn.biz](mailto:director@discoverybarn.biz)

*We look forward to working with you and your family.*



**Please initial each section below and then sign and date the bottom.**

\_\_\_ **I have received a copy of the Discovery Barn Parent Handbook.**

\_\_\_ A two-week notification is required before withdrawing your child.

\_\_\_ Children cannot be dropped off after 9:30 AM without a doctor's note.

\_\_\_ Please call or inform a staff member when your child will be absent.

\_\_\_ There is a \$20 late fee when tuition is not paid each week.

\_\_\_ We close at 6:00 PM. If you are late for pick-up there is a \$2 fee per minute that will be paid immediately to the teacher on duty.

\_\_\_ Children are not allowed to have cell phones or any other types of electronic devices.

\_\_\_ Nap mats items need to be washed weekly.

\_\_\_ If nap mats are torn, they must be replaced.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_