



A Ministry of Hermitage Hills Baptist Church

3475 Lebanon Pike • Hermitage • Tennessee • 37076

growuadmin@hermitagehills.com

615-889-6187

Parent Handbook

2023-2024



PARENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

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Letter from the Director

Dear Families,

Thank you for choosing to partner with Grow U for the weekday care of your child! We are a ministry of Hermitage Hills Baptist Church that serves in a preschool setting. We want to partner and connect with our families to support them spiritually, physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially. This handbook is planned for your use. It is designed to explain our program and help your child adjust to our school.

Educators are now emphasizing the importance of early childhood education. Preschools are not just play schools. They provide an environment in which children explore their world through experiences with people, places, and materials. Grow U is more than childcare; we are a preschool dedicated to the growth of our community.

We want to grow not only the children that attend throughout the week but also you as their family and us as their teachers. We will offer several opportunities for families to grow, whether through studying God's word in a LIFE group, participating as a family in a service project, or attending a fun event together. We expect you to come alongside us and be actively involved in our ministry as we partner, equip, and connect with families.

A partnership is a two-way street. We strive to provide numerous events and activities to support families, so we ask for your participation. The expectation is for families to participate in two events a semester. Please see the Parent Calendar for a list of this year's events.

We encourage close parent-teacher relationships, and conferences will be scheduled when necessary. A spirit of cooperation will be rewarding and will greatly benefit your child. If you have questions at any time, feel free to ask.

Again, thank you for beginning your journey with Grow U, and we look forward to growing with you in the years to come!

Sincerely,

Naomi Griffin
Grow U Director



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Vision

Seeing preschoolers and families experience LIFE change through Jesus Christ

Mission

As part of our L.I.F.E. mission of Hermitage Hills Baptist Church, Grow U will fortify our nation through strengthening relationships, marriages, and families.

Purpose Statement

- We will love intentionally and minister boldly to preschoolers and their families.
- We will provide a safe environment that equips the child spiritually, physically, emotionally, mentally, and socially.
- We will partner with families to encourage a child's strengths and support his/her development through curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and consistent with the testimony of Jesus Christ.
- We will equip families through LIFE groups that teach the importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ and workshops that educate families on issues affecting children today.
- We will connect with our families and community by providing opportunities for families to play and serve together.





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Section II : Annual Enrollment Responsibilities

Required Steps for Admission

To successfully apply for admission/re-enrollment, the applicant must complete all forms and actions listed below and return to the Grow U office no later than three business days before attending/returning.

- Enrollment Application and Agreement
 - Emergency Contact and Transport Information
 - Medical Information
 - Signed Permission in Case of Emergencies
 - Media Release
 - Initialed and Signed Acknowledgement of Receipt of Printed Policies
 - ACH Authorization Agreement
- Copy of Certificate of Immunizations
 - *In accordance with state law, you are required to furnish the immunization form (this form must have the State of Tennessee seal on it), stating your child's immunizations, a listing of any special health needs, and the doctor's signature stating that the child is healthy. You will be expected to obtain all future immunizations at the medically appropriate time. The Health Department is requiring that all children born on or after 7/1/01 have the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (Prevnar).*
- \$250 Registration Fee
- Signed Parent Commitment Agreement
- Signed Letter Acknowledging Receipt of "Keeping Kids Safe" Policies
- Signed Letter Acknowledging Receipt of Flu Information
- Signed Kindergarten Law Form (Kids going to kindergarten only)
- Tour of Facility/New Classroom
- Attend Orientation

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the director in writing of any changes of enrollment, address, phone number(s), hours of work, care and/or custody changes, and any other pertinent information regarding the family. For the safety of your child(ren), all records must be kept up to date.

Priority Enrollment

- Children of teachers and church staff will have first priority.
- Siblings of currently enrolled children will have second priority.
- New applicants, beginning with the children on the waitlist, will have third priority.

Sibling Waitlist Policy

Siblings of currently enrolled children receive priority over new applicants. However, to be eligible for enrollment, siblings 30 months and younger must be placed on the waitlist at least 6 months ahead of time by turning in a completed waitlist application and \$50 waitlist fee. Siblings over 30 months are enrolled on a first come first serve basis.



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Orientation

Orientation is mandatory for every family that will be attending Grow U the following school year. Orientation is a chance for parents to receive information on new or updated policies/procedures, and ask questions about their child's new classroom. Dates vary by school year, but orientations are primarily held in June.

Registration Fee

A nonrefundable annual registration fee of \$250 is due at the time of enrollment and every additional calendar school year that my child is enrolled at Grow U. The registration fee contributes to perishable classroom supplies, building usage, and administrative costs for the year.

Section III: Schedule

Hours of Operation

Hours are 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

Arrival Time

All children attending must arrive and be signed into their classroom by 9:00 AM. Parents are asked to let the office know if their child will be late no later than 8:30am. Late arrivals without notification will not be admitted and will still be charged tuition. If a child is absent, please notify the office that they will be out. This will enable us to maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day more effectively.

Closures

It is Grow U's intention to be open and provide care for all scheduled days, but inclement weather, natural/national disaster, pandemics/epidemics, or major building issues may disrupt service from time to time. We do not follow MNPS or Wilson County decisions regarding inclement weather, but we do take their decisions into account when considering the safety of our students and staff. In the case of closures, we will send out an email, post a notice on our Facebook page – Hermitage Hills Grow U, and send out a notification through our Parent Connect ProCare app. If Grow U is closed for emergencies or any of the issues listed above, parents will continue to be responsible for tuition payments.

Excluding unforeseen emergency circumstances, we will give as much advanced notice as possible for unscheduled closings. This decision will be made by the Grow U Administrative Team and the Hermitage Hills Director of Finance and Operations.

Late Pickup

Grow U closes promptly at 5:30 PM. A late fee of \$2.00 per minute per child will be charged for every minute after 5:30 PM a child remains in Grow U's care. Late fees are to be paid at the time of pick up or when arriving for the next class session. The director reserves the right to request that other child-care arrangements be made if late pickup occurs more than three times a session.



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Schedule Changes

Grow U is a program that offers quality childcare year-round. If needed, families may fill out a schedule change request form that they can get from the Grow U office. If a family chooses for their child to not attend at any point, they will have to unenroll and then re-enroll for the new school year. If a family does choose to unenroll at any point, their child is not guaranteed a spot for the following school year.

Unenrollment

A two-week written notice is required to unenroll from Grow U. If this notice is not provided, the account will be charged all tuition and fees for two weeks whether the child attends or not. When a child is unenrolled, he/she will only be eligible for reenrollment based on space availability and will begin the enrollment process as a new applicant.

Section IV : Tuition

Rates

*** Please see Enrollment Application and Grow U website for rates and pricing information***

Tuition is based on the child's classroom and will be reevaluated at each transition to a new classroom. Tuition rates are not changed immediately upon each child's growth to 12 or 31 months. Although the age of the class is generally "matched" to a child's chronological age, developmental levels, or the program's inability to transition children due to ratios and available places may result in children staying in a class for a time past the age level or moving a few months early. In this case, the tuition rate will remain consistent with the classroom the child is enrolled in.

Payment Information

Tuition payments are collected through ACH drafts.

- ACH payments will be set up using the ACH Draft Authorization Form. ACH payments will be set up weekly on Mondays. If there is a holiday or if we are closed, it will come out the first day we are back in session.

Agency Reimbursement

In the case of dependent care accounts, certificate program, or family donations, the parent is to act as the sole contact to ensure tuition is paid in full and on time. The parent is responsible for any tuition payment above and beyond any agency or third-party payment through dependent care accounts. If the agency or third-party payment is late, the parent is responsible for communicating with the agency or third-party to rectify the problem and is solely responsible for keeping the tuition account current and up to date, including paying tuition and fees until payment is received.



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Absences

After extensive research, we have found our tuition policies to be consistent with other schools. Because our costs remain the same throughout the year, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week to meet our expenses. Consequently, as much as we might like to, we cannot make allowances for any days missed in your regular attendance schedule. No credits, refunds, or make-up days shall be given for individual absences. If Grow U is in session and your child is out (vacation, illness, etc.), you will be charged tuition to hold your child's place. If Grow U is closed due to snow/weather or emergencies, tuition will still be charged. See Closures on page 5.

Yearly Increase

Each August, a cost-of-living increase could occur in our tuition rates. The new rates will be communicated in early Spring through email and/or mail. Rates are subject to change, and advance notice will be given before any changes are made.

Returned Payments/Unpaid Tuition

Tuition left unpaid after 7 days will result in your child being removed from the Grow U program. Grow U cannot guarantee a child's spot will be held when a child is unenrolled due to non-payment of tuition. Any unpaid tuition fees may be sent to a third-party collection agency. All returned checks or ACH drafts will be assessed with a fee of \$35 from Grow U in addition to any charges that the bank or financial institution may charge. If a payment is returned more than twice in a six-month period, an alternate method of payment will be required for the next six-month period.

Section V: Goals and Philosophies

Goals

It is our wish that our parents' goals be in line with the goals of Grow U. Our goals are:

- To meet the needs of the total child – spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, and social. We believe each child is an individual who has his/her own rate of physical development and pace of learning. Each child is accepted, loved, nurtured, and taught as an individual.
- To encourage and build each child's imagination and creativity.
- To instill a greater sense of self-worth and encourage self-confidence.
- To provide activities and an environment that will nurture the child's self-esteem.
- To guide every child with positive reinforcement in all activities. He/she is encouraged to try and try again and is never pressured into participating in any activity.
- To always handle discipline based on this belief: the child is a good person – it is behavior that is unacceptable and needs to be changed or guided to a more acceptable means of expression.
- To encourage parent involvement. You may visit your child any time during the day. In the case of a pandemic/epidemic, these visits will not be allowed to ensure the safety and health of our children and staff.



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Philosophies

- We like for the child to have some freedom of choice and self-expression, to have opportunities for creative expression and learn to think for him/herself.
- We do not do for the child what she can do for him/herself.
- We try to have a positive approach using kind firmness.
- We make suggestions more often than we give commands.
- We give the child reasons why we do certain things.
- We encourage the child to finish what he/she has begun.
- We remember that the child likes to help do things and to have responsibility.
- We consider all the children in the group and refrain from having favorites or from letting some children have more than their share of privileges.
- We are alert to needs that must be met every moment we are in the room.
- We use soft voices when speaking to the children.
- We remember that we do not need to be talking to the children for them to learn.
- We listen when the children feel like telling us something.
- We learn to talk WITH the child.
- We try to know what every child in our group is always doing.
- We do not touch up their artwork.
- When we pray, we use biblical names such as God and Jesus.

Religious Training

At Grow U, our priority is bringing up a child in a spiritually sound and encouraging environment. In order to accomplish this, we:

- Help each child develop a feeling of safety and security that is associated with worship.
- Help children to know God loves them right now, just as they are.
- Help children recognize behavior patterns that are desirable.
- Enjoy the habit of giving thanks for everyday experiences.
- Discuss and experience things that God has done to show He loves us.
- Increase a child's ability to make good choices.
- Develop the ability to become part of daily religious education activities.

Ways Parents Can Help

- Teach your child self-reliance. Encourage him/her to do things for him/herself.
- Confer regularly with the teacher about your child but refrain from discussing the child in his/her presence.
- Take an interest in the school and whatever your child brings home.
- Take time to listen to your child's daily experiences and discuss them with real interest.
- Buildup in your child a wholesome, friendly attitude toward the teacher and school.
- Live, work, and play as a family group.
- Report any upsetting experience you think will help the teacher better understand the child.
- Help your child anticipate happy experiences in relation to his/her school.



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Section VI: Center Policies

Security and Licensing

The Hermitage Hills Baptist Church Grow U program is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and is inspected yearly by the State Fire Marshall, Health Department, and the Department of Human Services. All doors to the preschool are locked and supervised by an attendant. Anyone who enters the building is subject to verification of identity and purpose in the building. All teachers and church employees within proximity to Grow U are background checked upon application. For the safety of our children, families, and staff, illegal drugs, and weapons of any kind are not permitted on the premises. There is also no smoking allowed on the premises of Hermitage Hills.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Fundamental to our mission of creating the ideal environment for the healthy development of the child is our obligation to honor the diversity of our employees and the families we serve. We expect and require the cooperation of all employees and families to treat one another and all families we serve with respect, and to maintain a discrimination and harassment-free atmosphere. If there is a finding of non-compliance with these Non-Discrimination Policies, appropriate disciplinary action, ranging from counseling to termination, will be taken promptly. Grow U serves all individuals who are eligible for its programs in a nondiscriminatory manner, without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

School Rules

All children attending Grow U will be taught and corrected using the school rules. These will appear in incident/accident reports as well. Grow U rules are: **G**ive Grace, **R**espect **O**thers, **O**n Task, **W**alking Feet, and **U**se Words.

Children will also be taught certain in-house rules, and they will be expected to follow them. Parents and emergency/transportation contacts are expected to follow these rules as well.

- Running is not permitted in the building.
- Hitting, pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, spitting, or pinching other children/infants/adults will not be allowed.
- No standing or climbing on chairs or tables.
- All clothing should appropriately cover the body and contain no foul or inappropriate content.
- No smoking, illegal drugs, or weapons are allowed on the premises.

These rules are for the children, families, and staff of Grow U. We explain the rules every day so that the children are familiar with our expectations and guidelines. Children disagree at times, and some of them find it difficult to express their feelings. Sometimes they hit, bite, or throw toys. We teach appropriate behavior and coping skills. The school and house rules provide a repetitive tool to teach children appropriate skills for interactions with one another.



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Communication

Communication is the key to a good relationship. Good communication is important to us because we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. Grow U encourages parents to communicate with his/her child's teacher and all administrative staff openly and respectfully throughout the year.

When a concern arises, parents have the right to:

- Share the concern with the child's teacher if it is related to the child or classroom.
- Share the concern with the director or assistant director.
- If the situation is in violation of DHS policy, you may file a formal complaint with DHS at 615-532-4410.

Important and sensitive issues will be discussed in private. Parent/teacher conferences are encouraged and occur throughout the year. We also will provide a parent bulletin board at the welcome desk for communication and announcements. The school has an answering machine that is checked periodically for messages. We communicate primarily through email, our Facebook Page- Hermitage Hills Grow U, and ProCare. Please make sure the email address on your child's enrollment application is checked regularly.

Grow U Staff will communicate and report daily through an app called ProCare Parent Connect. You can download this app on your phone or tablet. Parents will find their child's naptime, diaper changes, meals, and activities done throughout the day. You will be able to access your child's classroom lesson plans and communicate with your child's teacher through messages. You will also be able to access pictures and videos of your child.

Grow U will evaluate children three times a year. You may request a conference with teachers and/or administration at any time during the year when concerns arise. Please be respectful of the teacher's instructional time by requesting a phone call or conference to be scheduled instead of a conversation at drop off or pickup (if possible). Putting your concerns in writing is helpful and allows us to respond with the best accuracy regarding the situation.

Media Release

Grow U may photograph, video, and use a child's image in print or online to promote Grow U activities, including instructional use, promoting class work or achievements, the school/church website, ProCare, promotional brochures and presentations, and the school/church's social media pages if permission is given on the enrollment application and agreement. In no situation will a child's name be used to identify the child. Permission decisions may be changed at any point through the Grow U office.

Grow U Parent Committee



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The Grow U Parent Committee is an association that exists to build community within the Grow U family through coordinating special events, volunteering within the classrooms and/or office, and supporting Grow U through prayer. Teachers, parents, and family members are welcome to volunteer as much as their schedule permits. For more information, please see the Grow U office.

Fundraising

Grow U is a non-profit ministry of the church that works within the confines of tuition to cover expenses. To keep tuition affordable, we strive to supplement our income through fundraising. Every year, Grow U has two fundraising opportunities that serve to supplement our expenses to increase classroom equipment, teacher compensation, and enrichment activities. Donations and volunteer opportunities will be offered through the Grow U PTA.

Termination

We reserve the right to terminate for these reasons, but not limited to:

- Failure to complete required forms.
- Failure to pay tuition.
- Inability to meet the child's needs by our program.
- Knowingly bringing a sick child to school and masking symptoms with medication.
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations.
- Serious illness of child.
- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Lack of parental cooperation.
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property.
- A child whose behavior continuously causes bodily harm to others, is a constant disruption to daily routines, or requires extensive one-on-one care to comply with center routines or safety procedures.

Prior to termination, all options will be considered including reducing the number of days the child may attend, limiting time the child may attend each day, moving to another class if space is available, and referrals to additional resources.

The action plan will be discussed with parents before implementation. Actions implemented will be documented with information on improvements or concerns. If termination must occur, a plan will be outlined with parents for the transition.

Outside Childcare

At Grow U we develop excellent relationships with our families. From time to time, parents may request individual staff members to babysit/nanny for them outside of Grow U working hours. This policy clarifies key points and procedures regarding private arrangements between staff and parents.

- Individual staff members or volunteers are NOT allowed to babysit/nanny for Grow U families outside of pre-school hours.



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- It crosses from the professional to the personal and has far reaching consequences in terms of safeguarding, public liability, and confidentiality.
- If an employee or volunteer engages in caring for a child enrolled at Grow U outside of preschool hours, that person would be in breach of contract, and this could result in disciplinary action.

EXCEPTION- if the employee or volunteer has a pre-existing relationship prior to this policy being in place, it will be grandfathered in that babysitting is not forbidden. However, the following policies and procedures apply:

- The relationship must be disclosed and recorded in our Grow U “babysitting journal”.
- If a member of staff picks up a child from our Grow U program, they must be authorized to do so, and written permission must be provided by parents. This can be a note on the Registration form.
- Grow U is not responsible for any private arrangements or agreements between individual staff members and families.
- Confidentiality of employment must always be adhered to and respected. Any breach of confidentiality by a member of staff regarding Grow U, other staff members, parents, or other children will be treated as disciplinary action.
- Grow U has the duty to safeguard all children while on our premises and in the care of our staff.
- Staff do have the duty to report any safeguarding concerns in and outside of work.
- Grow U will not be held responsible for any health and safety, or other issues that may arise from these private arrangements.
- Any such hours of work may not interfere with staff members’ working hours or affect their relationship with the child or other children.
- Staff should be aware that an incident while babysitting/nannying would have an impact on their suitability to work at Grow U.

Children with Disabilities

Grow U will make reasonable accommodations for children with known disabilities. Qualified therapists/consultants may visit these children provided the following guidelines are met:

- Parents of the child must provide written permission for the visit.
- Therapist must meet with the Grow U Director to outline the plan for observation prior to the first scheduled visit.
- Frequency and time of visit must be coordinated with the classroom schedule.
- Visitors must sign in/out at each visit and show proper identification.
- Written notices will be sent to parents of all children in the classroom notifying them of the visitors and their schedules.

Non-Child Care Staff



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Classes may be observed by non-childcare staff occasionally. These individuals would not be counted in adult: child ratios and would never be alone with children. An example of an observation is by a college student observing a class as the teacher implements curriculum. Parental permission is given on the enrollment application. Again, these individuals will be documented by Grow U and always supervised by a Grow U staff member.

Discipline and Behavior Management

We maintain a positive discipline policy that focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency, and firmness. Discipline is always reasonable, appropriate and in terms the children can understand. Again, our school rules are:

Give grace Respect others On task Walking feet Use words

There will be no spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name-calling, or isolation used under any circumstances. Food or play will never be withheld from children as a means of punishment. We use praise and encouragement of good behavior rather than focusing on the negative aspects of bad behavior. To prevent the escalation of negative behavior, we redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when the offense involves another person, and sometimes withdraw privileges based on the principle of “natural consequences.”

We will hold a conference with the parents if a discipline problem arises that does not respond to the techniques already mentioned. We will try together to arrive at a workable solution. Parents may be called to remove their child if his or her behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children. If this behavior continues, we reserve the right to ask that you make other child-care arrangements for the safety and well-being of everyone.

Biting

Biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 30-month classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their child may be bit or will bite another child. Grow U understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior. Common reasons why a child may bite include teething, exploring, stress, frustration, imitating behavior, personal space is violated or crowded, lack of vocabulary, sign of affection, or to obtain attention. A child may become frustrated and is not effectively able to express “move”, “I was playing with that”, or “you are too close”, which may lead to a bite.

If a bite occurs, we comfort the child who has been bitten. We then firmly let the child who bit know that “biting hurts” and offer an object to bite such as a teething ring. Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered confidential and cannot be disclosed.



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To minimize incidents of biting, we carefully observe the child who has shown biting tendencies to determine if there is a pattern of when the biting behavior occurs. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior through ongoing dialogue and comparison of classroom and home strategies. Relevant articles are also made available to parents and staff.

Gold Sneaker Initiative

We are excited to let you know about our participation in the “Gold Sneaker Initiative”. The Gold Sneaker Initiative was developed by the Tennessee Department of Health to enhance policies related to health and wellness within licensed childcare providers across Tennessee. By integrating nutrition and physical activity into our children’s daily routine, children receive repeated exposure to information and principles for healthy living. It is this repeated exposure and experience with nutrition education and physical activity that will influence children in a positive way. Children will begin to understand that nutrition and activity are a regular and essential part of each day, thus reinforcing a lifetime of healthy habits. The Gold Sneaker policies to enact will include minimum requirements on physical activity, sedentary activities, breastfeeding, mealtime, behaviors, portion sizes, and a tobacco-free facility. Please see the policy list below:

Policy 1:

Children attending less than a full day program shall be offered a proportional amount of physical activity time as required by TDHS licensure rules. Physical activity for children ages three years and older must be a balance of structured and unstructured play, both indoors and outdoors (weather permitting) utilizing age-appropriate activities.

Policy 2:

Providers shall provide education (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) to families twice each year that addresses the importance of limiting screen time according to current American Academy of Pediatrics policy and the development of a Family Media Plan.

Policy 3:

Children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime. The childcare director shall take Go NAP SACC Self Assessments (Infant and Child Safety Physical Activity & Screen Time) to compare their physical activity practices to best practice standards.

Policy 4:

Childcare providers must ensure physical activity is a positive experience for children and that it is never used negatively or to control behavior.



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Policy 5:

Providers shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including breastfeeding. All educators shall be trained to advocate for breastfeeding, safely prepare expressed breastmilk for feeding, feed infants according to their individual needs, and store expressed breast milk properly. Providers shall publicly display their support for breastfeeding infants and mothers by posting signage or other publicly facing information (i.e., participate in Breastfeeding Welcomed Here through the TN Department of Health or Team Nutrition resources for new and expectant moms about breastfeeding).

Policy 6:

Childcare educators shall ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including adequate time for snack and meal consumption and age-appropriate portion size. Childcare educators shall provide education to families twice each year (i.e., via parent meetings, provider newsletter articles, sharing of educational video resources, etc.) that addresses nutritional learning experiences, with a focus on adequate time for snacks and meals and age-appropriate portion size. All eating opportunities shall consist of a respect for the child and promotion of a positive attitude toward food. Childcare educators shall apply evidence-based early food preference learning strategies such as introducing healthy foods, repeatedly pairing new healthy food choices with foods children already like and modeling consumption and enjoyment of healthy foods.

Policy 7:

The childcare provider campus shall be free of all tobacco and tobacco-related products, including smoking, smokeless and electronic products. The campus is inclusive of all vehicles used to transport enrolled children, all outdoor spaces, and all indoor locations, whether or not children are present. Childcare employees and volunteers may not use tobacco or tobacco-related products while off-campus at provider-related activities (i.e. fieldtrips, walks, and all other outdoor activities).

Employees who use tobacco products while off campus are required to change clothes and wash hands thoroughly prior to interacting with children. "No Smoking" signs shall be posted conspicuously at each childcare provider entrance, as required by state law.

Safe Sleep

In an effort to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death, Grow U practices a safe sleep policy. This includes:

- Always placing a baby on his or her back to sleep.
- Use of a firm mattress, covered by a tight fitted sheet.
- No blankets, soft objects, toys, or pacifiers attached to a stuffed animal are allowed in the crib while the baby is sleeping.

Babies are touched every 15 minutes while sleeping for SIDS checks. We provide supervised tummy time throughout the day. To help reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death at home, you can put these into practice:



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- Your baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or on a chair alone, with you, or with anyone else.
- Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area.
- While pregnant, women should receive regular health care, and not smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs during pregnancy or after the baby is born.
- Do not smoke during pregnancy, and do not smoke or allow smoking around your baby.
- If able, breastfeed your baby.
- Give your baby a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string for naps and at night.
- Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep.
- Follow health care provider guidance on your baby's vaccines and regular health checkups.
- Do not use home heart or breathing monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Give your baby plenty of Tummy Time when he or she is awake and when someone is watching.

Relevant Phone Numbers

Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS): 615-532-4000

Animal Control: 615-862-7928

Bill Wilkerson Center: 615-936-5000

Birth/Death Certificates: 615-741-1763

Child Support Enforcement: 615-726-0530

CoverKids Health Insurance: 866-620-8864

Crisis Services Hotline: 1-800-809-9957

DCS Abuse Hotline: 1-877-237-0004

Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-356-6767

Drug Helpline: 1-800-662-4357

Education Department Information: 615-741-5158

Health Department Information: 615-355-3011

Homework Hotline: 615-298-6636

Lantern Lane Farm: 615-220-0051

Metro Immunizations: 615-340-5607

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Tennessee Emergency Management Agency: 615-741-0001

Tennessee Voices for Children: 615-269-7751

Second Harvest Food Bank : 615-329-3491

Suicide Prevention/Crisis Intervention Center : 615-244-7444

YMCA Restore Ministries: 615-565-6281

Section VII: Illness Policy

Research

"The risk of transmission of the agents that cause infectious diseases is increased when children are gathered into groups for any reason. This risk is particularly significant in day care because of the many close physical interactions between children and adults. The majority of daycare programs attempt to



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exclude ill children. However, illness among young children is frequent and many parents want to bring mildly ill children to day-care programs. This results in a struggle between staff and parents and a desire for absolute criteria to use to determine when a child's illness requires exclusion. Day-care personnel criticize parents for demanding care for sick children. In turn, parents criticize day-care programs, believing that their children acquire their illnesses from day-care contacts. The resulting tensions strain parent/staff relationships, negatively affecting the quality of the day-care experience. Unfortunately, absolute criteria for exclusion of ill children does not exist. Day-care programs base their exclusion policies on two issues:

1. Risk of transmission of infectious diseases and
2. The demand of sick children for increased adult attention, which may exceed the resources of the day-care program.

(Quoted from Pediatrics in Review)

Recommendations

Center health policies may differ from your child's pediatrician's opinion. In all situations, Grow U's policies, and ultimately state licensing rules, will override your child's doctor's recommendation. Group care conditions differ from individual care situations.

Common Conditions

Some of the common conditions for which a child will be sent home are as follows. This is not an exclusive list of illnesses warranting notification and required pick up.

- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** This is a highly contagious infection of the eye characterized by redness and tearing, a yellow discharge from the eyes, or eyelashes stuck together. When prescribed by a physician, children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the center and all discharge must be gone.
- **Colored Mucus:** Although some physicians say that it is okay for a child to return to school with colored mucus coming from the nose, we often see colored mucus quickly escalate into a more serious illness. Our policy states that mucus must be clear for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.
- **COVID-19:** a mild to severe respiratory illness that is caused by a [coronavirus](#) (*Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2* of the genus *Betacoronavirus*), is transmitted chiefly by contact with infectious material (such as respiratory droplets) or with objects or surfaces contaminated by the causative virus, and is characterized especially by fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may progress to pneumonia and respiratory failure. While fever, cough, and shortness of breath are common symptoms of COVID-19, other symptoms may include fatigue, chills, body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- **Diarrhea:** A child who has 3 or more instances of diarrhea (watery stools) will be sent home. Diarrhea is usually caused by viral infections; however, bacteria and parasites may be the cause. The child must be diarrhea-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the center. In cases of highly contagious stomach and intestinal illness (such as Norovirus), the



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return to center timeframe may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of the Grow U community. If your child has an allergy or condition that regularly causes diarrhea, please alert the staff in the “Medical Information” section of your child’s enrollment application.

- **Ear Infection (Otitis Media):** Ear infections are extremely common. Children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics and be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) before returning to the center.
- **Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease:** This is caused by a viral infection. It is characterized by small ulcers in the mouth, blisters on the hands and feet, and sometimes blisters near the genitalia and on the buttocks. The child is contagious until the fever is gone (typically 3-4 days) and must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) as well as any open blisters must be healed and crusted over before returning to the center.
- **Head Lice:** Head Lice is characterized by a very itchy scalp and nits (white eggs) on the hair shaft within an inch of the scalp. Unlike dandruff, nits cannot be easily removed. In untreated cases, a few live bugs may also be present on the scalp. Children may return to the center after they have proof of treatment – a receipt for medication and/or doctor’s note – and all personal belongings at the center have been washed.
- **Impetigo:** This skin infection is characterized by crusted sores, which may appear anywhere but usually appear first in the facial area. When prescribed by a physician, children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the center and all discharge must be gone.
- **Respiratory Infections/Common Cold:** These are very common and are usually caused by viruses. It is advised that your child remain at home until all symptoms are gone. If a fever is associated with the infection, your child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) before returning to the center.
- **Scabies:** This is a very itchy rash between the fingers, on wrists, under arms, at the belt line and, in infants, on the head, neck, palms, and soles. The rash is caused by a mite. The child may return to the center after one treatment.
- **Strep Throat:** This is characterized by swollen neck glands and a temperature combined with a sore throat. Children with this condition must have taken the prescribed antibiotics and be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) before returning to the center.
- **Temperature:** A child will be sent home if he/she has a temperature of 100.4° F or higher. The child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) before returning to the center. His or her activity level and appetite should be back to normal as well. In cases of highly contagious illness associated with fever (such as the flu), the return to center timeframe may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of the Grow U community.
- **Vomiting:** A child who vomits 1 or more times will be sent home and should remain home until 24 hours after the vomiting has stopped. Most vomiting is caused by infection.



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Stomach viruses are highly contagious and can spread through the center rapidly. The child must not have vomited for at least 24 hours before returning to the center. In cases of highly contagious stomach and intestinal illness (such as Norovirus), the return to center timeframe may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of the Grow U community.

Rashes

If your child develops a rash and the cause is unknown, we will ask that the doctor check out the rash and verify in writing or through a phone call that it is not contagious.

Teething

Teething is not a reason for exclusion. Teething can cause a low-grade fever (under 100.0° F), crankiness, loose bowel movements, and a clear, runny nose. Teething does not cause the exclusionary conditions described above.

Notification

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the director not only of the absence but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses which may occur or spread in our facility. This information will only be shared with staff on a “need to know” basis.

If your child has an infectious/ communicable (easily spread) disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the director so that parents of children in your child’s class may be notified that an infectious/communicable disease is present. Only the infectious/communicable disease information will be shared. Grow U will take all measures necessary to protect your child’s confidentiality.

Illness at School

Our program will not keep actively sick children under any circumstances, and it is the parents’ responsibility to make alternative arrangements in the event of an illness. If the child shows symptoms at school, the child must be picked up within an hour from the time a parent is called. While waiting for the parent or emergency contact, the child will be kept in an isolated area in the classroom on a resting mat. All mats and sheets will be cleaned after the child leaves the center.

If we call a parent to pick up a child due to illness, that child will be required to stay home the following day. Your child may return to school 24 hours after the symptoms of illness end without the aid of medication. Grow U does not allow partial days of attendance when factoring 24 hours after symptoms.

Under no circumstance shall you bring your child to school while he/she is sick or showing symptoms of illness. Masking your child’s symptoms with medication and bringing them to school is not allowed and could be cause for immediate termination of enrollment.



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Returning After an Illness

A written statement of good health from a doctor will be required to return to school when a child has had a diagnosed communicable disease (strep, pink eye, impetigo, etc.), undergone surgery, or has been hospitalized. A child will continue to be excluded from care if the appropriate note is not received before the child is brought to school. We do not require a statement when a child has had the chicken pox, but we will do a visual check to make sure that all the pox is dried.

The statement from the doctor must include:

- Diagnosis
- Statement that the child is no longer contagious.
- Date that the child may return to the center.
- Any post-care guidelines that are relevant to a day in the child's classroom.

With or without a statement from the doctor, the final decision as to whether the child can come to school will be made by the director. In the case of highly contagious illnesses, the return to center timeframe may be extended to ensure the health and wellness of the Grow U community.

Medication

We will only administer lifesaving medications such as Epi-pens, inhalers, etc. We will NOT administer over-the-counter medication except for diaper cream. Medication forms are required for diaper cream and can be signed in and approved by the teacher. Under no circumstance is medicine of any kind to be left in diaper bags, backpacks, bottle/cup, or lunch boxes. Because children have access to belongings, all items in a child's diaper bag/backpack labeled "keep out of reach of children" (diaper cream, sunscreen, hand sanitizer, lotion, medicine, etc.) will be removed and disposed of for the safety of the children. Please keep these items at home unless approved by a Grow U staff member with a completed medication form.

Medical Emergencies

Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep the children safe through supervision and childproofing. Minor injuries receive appropriate first aid, and if any emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, your child will be taken to the nearest hospital where you will be asked to meet us. If you are not going to be at your usual place of employment or at home, please make sure that we have a number where you can be reached in the event of an emergency.

Section VIII: Classroom Information

Signing In and Out

Parents are required to sign in/out for pick-up and drop-off each day. A sign-in/out sheet and pen are located by the door. Please make sure the time as well as your signature is legible and shows your first and last name as opposed to "mom" or "grandparent". Per DHS regulations, you must print and sign your full name. This gives us a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who brought or picked up the child each day.



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Arrival and Departure

When picking up or dropping off, please park in one of the marked parking spots. Do not park under the canopy or in the drive-through. This is not only a safety concern for those trying to get through but also blocks the view of the crosswalk as children enter and exit the building. You and your child's safety are our main concern at Grow U, and we appreciate you taking the time to make sure our parking lot is safe. Also, please do not leave siblings or other children under the age of 12 alone in your vehicle, even if you anticipate a quick drop off or just need to run something in. If you want to keep a sick or sleeping child in the car, please call the Grow U office and if available one of our staff will be happy to come and wait by your car while you drop off/pick up.

Children and infants should be fed breakfast if they arrive after 8:00am. Breakfast is served every day between 7:30am-8:00am. DHS requires that we sit with each child to prevent choking, so teachers are unable to feed children outside of our normally scheduled feeding time due to the responsibilities taking place. Also, we will strive to send your child home with a clean diaper and would appreciate the same consideration when you drop off your child.

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from their parents or to cry before they are dropped off. Please make your drop off as brief as possible because the longer you prolong the departure, the harder it is for the child. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back is all that is needed. The teacher's total attention needs to be on the children; therefore, this is not a good time to engage in a lengthy conversation. You may send the teacher a note through ProCare about your child's needs for the day or call the office and speak to the director or assistant director and they will relay your message to your child's teacher.

Be brief at pick-up times also. Some children will test to see if the rules still apply at school when parents are also present. During arrival and departure, please continue to work with us ensuring Grow U rules are still followed.

Enrolled children as well as their siblings must always be supervised, even at drop off and pick up. Please do not leave strollers or siblings in the hallway unattended while you drop off or pick up your child, nor allow your children to run through the hallways or stand/jump off on the seats in the Treehouse Lobby.

Transportation and Emergency Contacts

A child will be released only to the parents or to persons whose names are listed on the child's transportation plan. Please let us know ahead of time if someone else will be dropping off or picking up your child. A verbal notice in person or by telephone is fine provided the person is on the list of people authorized to pick up your child. If the person is not on that list, we must have written permission to release the child. There are no exceptions.

In accordance with DHS regulations, we will not release a child to anyone whose behavior places the child at immediate risk. If a person arrives to pick up a child, and it is determined that his/her



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behavior is in any way harmful to the child – intoxicated, out of control, without a car seat, etc. – the Grow U staff will follow these procedures:

- The person will not be allowed to take the child home.
- The teacher will refer the person to the Director and/or Assistant Director for assistance.
- The emergency transportation names listed in the child’s file will be contacted to arrange alternate transportation.
- If the person in question insists on taking the child, the police will be notified.

Hygiene

We enforce strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Parents of a child not meeting the cleanliness standard will be asked to immediately correct the problem or remove the child from the program. Your child should arrive at school bathed and groomed. Your child should be dressed in appropriate play clothes. A change of clean clothes should be in the child’s bag in case of accidents.

Throughout the day, your child will frequently wash his/her hands using soap and paper towels. Hand washing is required when the child enters the classroom, before and after meals, after messy play, and after toileting. Handwashing is also required for any parent or caregiver who enters the room.

Your child will bring home his/her blanket at the end of each week. We encourage you to wash the linens weekly to reduce the spread of germs.

Clothing and Attire

We like outdoor play and lots of messy activities; therefore, we encourage you to dress your child appropriately. Children should not be dressed in nice clothing; they should arrive dressed for play. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate for outdoor and indoor play. Shorts or tights should be worn under dresses or skirts.

Children ages 3 through 5 are required to always have at least one season and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center. Children under 3 years of age are required to have two-three season and size appropriate complete changes of clothing at the center. A complete change of clothing includes a shirt, a pair of pants, underwear, socks, and shoes.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. Grow U is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will be encouraged every day children attend Grow U. If the temperature is between 32° and 95° (taking into consideration wind chill and heat index) and not actively raining, classes are required to go outside to play. If the temperature is under 32° or over 95°, the Grow U office and teachers will make the decision on whether to go outside and for how long. We have our Indoor



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Playroom and classroom gross motor as our alternative play. No matter the temperature, children will be supervised carefully to prevent overheating.

Toilet Training

When you think your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching at home. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner. It is much easier to toilet train children when they are ready. We do not like to force them. If you are toilet training your child, he or she must be kept in pull-ups or training pants while at the center. Putting a child in diapers part-time and training pants part-time can be confusing and delay the training process. The pull-ups must have resealable sides so that we are able to change your child while in the bathroom.

Personal Belongings

Please do not bring toys from home unless they can be shared with the entire group. We especially do not allow guns or any toy that teaches aggression. If toys other than those suitable for sharing are brought, please understand that they will be put away. Exceptions are favorite rest-time toys and toys for show and tell. The teacher will inform you of show-and-tell times. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items. All personal items should be clearly marked with the child's name.

To be prepared for a successful day, parents need to provide the following items daily:

- **Infants:**
 - Diapers – all diapers must fit in the child's bag as we do not have additional storage space for diapers in bulk.
 - Bottles with formula or breastmilk – all breastmilk must be thawed and in bottles; all bottles for formula must be filled with the appropriate amount of water and have a pre-portioned amount of formula ready for mixing.
 - Baby food or finger food (when applicable).
 - At least two complete changes of clothes – includes a shirt, a pair of pants, socks, and shoes.
- **Toddlers and Preschoolers:**
 - Diapers/pull-ups (if potty-training) – all diapers must fit in the child's bag as we do not have additional storage space for diapers in bulk.
 - At least two complete change of clothes (more if potty-training) – includes a shirt, a pair of pants, underwear, socks, and shoes.
 - Lunch and snacks – see Food on page 24.
 - Naptime blanket and comfort item (soft plush only) for nap.

Grow U will provide a cot for naptime. Parents must furnish a blanket- please label with your child's name.



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Creative Curriculum/FunnyDaffer

Grow U teachers implement Creative Curriculum and/or FunnyDaffer as their primary directive in instruction. Both Curriculums begin with infants and continue through Pre-K. The activities are primarily play-based and focus on 38 objectives that directly align with the Tennessee state standards for grade school. Teachers are trained to work with children through observing and reacting to areas children are doing well and areas children need to work on, both as a group and on an individual level. There is always a balance between free choice and adult-directed activities. As well as curriculum, routines such as snacks, lunch, and rest occur at about the same time each day to support social education.

Keeping Kids Safe Curriculum

The law requires all licensed childcare programs to educate preschool children (ages 3 and above) on the importance of personal safety and child abuse prevention. In the Keeping Kids Safe curriculum offered by the state of Tennessee by the Department of Human Services, children are taught prevention, safety, and the correct anatomical names for the body parts. This curriculum also teaches bike safety, fire safety, water safety, feelings, problem solving, and other beneficial topics for child safety. You can find the Keeping Kids Safe curriculum online at:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/keeping_kids_safe_content_updated_wdraft_cover.pdf.

Media

TV is not permitted as a part of our regular daily schedule. We do, however, have short, educational videos that are developmentally appropriate and coincide with our curriculum. Other activities also are available during this time. On special occasions, we may show a movie and will have permission forms for parents to sign before the movie is shown.

Food

Grow U will be providing Breakfast, Lunch, and Afternoon Snack every day. All required food groups will be met. Food groups consist of dairy, protein, vegetables, grains, and fruits. DHS does require that we encourage healthy eating habits including well-balanced meals. Do not send anything but water for Raccoon through Cub classrooms. Chipmunk through Fox will have water cups provided throughout the day. Do not send glass containers of any kind. Let us know of any dietary restrictions or allergies your child may have. **Because of severe food allergies, we are a nut free facility. Please do not send any type of nut butter or any nut products.**

If your child will not eat the food Grow U provides, you are still responsible for the full tuition rate along with providing the appropriate snacks and lunch that meets DHS and Gold Sneaker standards.

We are happy to celebrate birthdays with the children. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher if you would like to bring a special snack for the class. Again, please be mindful of classroom allergies, which are posted in the room and must be nut-free.



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Example of Menu Items:

Monday: Cheese quesadilla, corn, pineapples, roll, milk

Tuesday: Turkey and cheese roll up, green beans, oranges, roll, milk

Wednesday: Chicken nuggets, carrots, applesauce, roll, milk

Thursday: Ravioli, salad, strawberries, ½ slice of whole wheat bread, milk

Friday: Macaroni and cheese, peas, mixed fruit, roll, milk

Nap and Quiet Time

All children are expected to nap or rest during our designated nap/rest time each day. In the infant room, naps occur as needed.

Transitions into Older Classrooms

Children are assessed for placement into the older classes by chronological ages and in terms of their total development – spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, and social. Interest level in the activities typical of each group is also taken into consideration as is the availability of an open place matching the child’s enrollment needs. The classroom’s teacher is also consulted as to the readiness of the child. Parents will be notified and provided with a transition plan for their child before movement takes place.

Section IX: Additional Policies

Additional Policies

Day-to-day decisions not covered in the handbook or under state licensing rules are at the discretion of the director. Policies of this program are under the direction of the church-elected Grow U Ministry Team. Any changes or suggestions will be presented to that team for consideration.

The above policies are not an all-inclusive list of policies and all children, family members, and authorized agents are bound by state childcare regulations and Hermitage Hills Baptist Church policies. Tennessee childcare regulations supersede Grow U’s policies. Continued enrollment proves acknowledgement of an agreement to abide by all policies and regulations. State Child Care Licensing Rules are on file at Grow U and are available for review upon request.