

Operational Policies and Procedures



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Hours of Operation

Complies with Section 746.501 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

Ashley's Playhouse offers extended hours. Our normal schedule is as follows:

Monday – Thursday: 7a.m. to 10p.m.

Friday: 7a.m. to midnight

Saturday: 8a.m. to midnight

Sunday: Available for private parties

Procedures for Release of Children

Complies with Section 746.4101 and 746.4103 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

- **Ashley's Playhouse** uses a childcare software called Procure to sign the children in and out. During enrollment, a photo may be taken of the authorized persons and children. Each parent will have their fingerprint scanned or a unique code programmed that identifies them and the children they are authorized to sign in and out.
- If there is no fingerprint on file, but the adult is listed as an authorized pickup for the child, a valid government issued photo identification must be shown before the child will be released.
- If parents or other emergency contacts cannot be reached after one hour past closing, the Austin Police Department will be contacted.

If at any time **Ashley's Playhouse** staff feel uncomfortable releasing a child to an individual, the Austin Police Department will be called.

Health Check

The health and well-being of each child at **Ashley's Playhouse** is of the utmost importance to us, therefore we will conduct a daily health check before the parent's leave. The results of the health check will be determined by the center's staff, not the parent, on whether or not the child remains in care for that day.

Illness and Exclusion

Complies with Section 746.3601 and 746.3603 and 746.3605 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

Illness

Due to the health and well-being of each child at **Ashley's Playhouse**, we will strictly adhere to the following illness and exclusion criteria:

- Fever as measured by a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Vomiting (two or more episodes in 24 hours)
- Swelling/Redness of the Throat
- Constant Cough
- Extreme Fatigue/Lethargy
- Head Lice
- Reddened/Draining Eyes
- Skin Rash
- Bumps on Hands, Feet and/or Throat
- Uncontrollable Diarrhea
- Mouth Sores
- Diagnosis of a communicable disease by a healthcare professional with no medical documentation that the child is no longer contagious
- If a child is suspected of having a contagious condition, a parent or authorized pick-up person must arrive at the childcare center as soon as possible, but not to exceed one hour after being called.
- A child must be fever free and symptom free without the use of fever relieving or other medications for a period of 24 hours before they will be allowed to return to the center.
- If a child is diagnosed as having a contagious condition, parents should notify **Ashley's Playhouse** as soon as possible so we can alert other families. Confidentiality will be upheld.

Exclusion

The exclusion of a child from care is determined by:

- Whether or not the child can participate in the activities planned for the day in his/her classroom/age group
- Whether or not the child requires more care than the staff can provide without compromising the care needs of the other children at the center
- Whether keeping the child in care will pose an increased risk to other children and adults at the center

Ashley's Playhouse reserves the right to exclude any family and/or child from the facility based on their sole discretion.

Dispensing and Handling Medication

Complies with Division 2, Medications and Medical Assistance of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

Dispensing

- **Ashley's Playhouse** will administer medication in its original container when parents give prior authorization by a parent completing and signing a medical authorization form.
- No more than a single dose of parent provided medication can be administered with phone approval from the parent and a medical authorization form must be signed upon return.
- Authorization to administer medication expires on the first anniversary of the date the authorization is provided.
- **Ashley's Playhouse** is not authorized to administer medication in excess of the medication's label instructions or the directions of the child's health-care professional.
- Parent authorization is not required to administer a medication to a child in a medical emergency to prevent the death or serious bodily injury of the child, provided that **Ashley's Playhouse** administers the medication as prescribed, directed, and intended.

Handling

- All medication will be stored out of reach from children
- Medication will be stored so it does not contaminate food
- **Ashley's Playhouse** will refrigerate medication (if applicable)

Parental Notifications

Complies with Section 746.501 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

From time to time, **Ashley's Playhouse** may choose to update the Operational Policies and Procedures. The most recent version will be available at www.ashleysplayhouseaustin.com to view or download, as well as available upon request.

Discipline and Guidance

Complies with Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

Ashley's Playhouse uses positive methods of discipline and guidance.

- Discipline will be individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- A caregiver will only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least 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
 - 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.

- **Ashley's Playhouse** will not use harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child.

Meals and Food Service Practices

Complies with Subchapter Q, Nutrition and Food Service of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

Meals

At **Ashley's Playhouse** parents will have the option to provide their children's food or purchase breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner. Snacks are scheduled to be served three times a day and will be included in the price of service. We will offer food in the following food groups at least one time throughout the day:

- Milk
- Meat/Meat-Substitute
- Vegetables and Fruit
- Whole Grains

Parents of children with food allergies are required to provide written documentation of the food allergy. If the child is severely allergic to peanuts or any other nuts, it is recommend that parents inform staff not to provide any food, as some products served at **Ashley's Playhouse** are produced in facilities that may also produce nut products.

Ashley's Playhouse is a NUT FREE facility, as such it will not provide any nut products and will also inform parents not to provide nut products for their children's meals and snacks.

Food Service and Preparation

All food and drinks will be of safe quality and will be stored, prepared, distributed, and served under sanitary and safe conditions.

Immunization Requirements

Complies with Section 746.613, 746.617, 746.621, 746.623, and 746.625 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

- **Ashley's Playhouse** is required to obtain a copy of the child's immunization record as specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services in 25 TAC 97, Subchapter B (relating to Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of Higher Education).
 - Provided immunization records must include the following:
 - The child's name and birth date;
 - The number of doses and vaccine type;
 - The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination; and
 - The signature or stamp of the physician or other health care professional who administered the vaccine.

- For a child attending a school away from the childcare center
 - Parents may note on the admission form that the child’s immunization record is current and on file at another school that the child attends. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the school listed in the statement.
- For parents that cannot provide an immunization record and/or are exempt, management will need to be notified and can assist the parent according to the Texas Department of State Health Services rules in 25 TAC §97.66.
- More information on immunization requirements can be found at www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize

Tuberculin testing requirements

Complies with Section 746.627 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

Tuberculin tests are not required by **Ashley’s Playhouse** but we recommend that parents discuss this test with their doctors.

APH Payment Information

- Payment is due upon pickup based on the following prices: under 18 months is \$12/hour and from 18 months through 12 years old is \$10/hour. Siblings receive a 40% discount if they attend together and the discount is applied to the oldest child(ren). Rates are pro-rated to the minute based on the hourly rate.
- There is a one-time \$40 registration fee per family.
- Parents may purchase meals at the listed price.
- There is a fee of \$1 per diaper if **Ashley’s Playhouse’s** diapers are used.
- If a child needs to borrow **Ashley’s Playhouse’s** clothing for any reason, there is a fee of \$5 *per article* of clothing that will be credited back to the family’s account if returned.
- **Ashley’s Playhouse** offers an APH membership for a minimum of a 6 month commitment that cannot be canceled prior to the 6 months being fulfilled. After 6 months, the APH membership may be cancelled at any time with 10 days written notice, after which rates will return to normal. Please see the APH membership form for more details.
- **Ashley’s Playhouse** also offers blocks of time for which parents receive 10%-20% off their childcare fees. No refunds will be given for prepaid blocks of time. Once the block is depleted, rates return back to the normal rates unless another block of time is purchased, in which case the applicable discount will be applied.
- If a child or children are picked up past **Ashley’s Playhouse** normal closing times, a late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged in addition to the normal childcare rate. If parents or other emergency contacts cannot be reached after one hour past closing, the Austin Police Department will be contacted.

Hearing and vision screening requirements

Complies with Section 746.629 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

- Vision and hearing screening tests are required for children 4 years old by September 1st. Parents are required to provide one of the following as documentation:
 - The individual visual acuity and sweep check results
 - A signed statement that the child's screening records are current and on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school the child attends away from the center.
 - An affidavit stating that the vision or hearing screening conflicts with the tenets or practices of a church or religious denomination of which the affiant is an adherent or member.

Enrollment procedures

Complies with Section 746.501 and 746.605 of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers

To enroll children at **Ashley's Playhouse**, parents can either complete the registration form online at www.ashleysplayhouseaustin.com or at the center. Upon the first visit, parents will need to complete a registration form with the following information:

- Contact information for persons other than a parent to whom the child may be released and whom can be contacted in case of an emergency (can be the same person)
- Emergency-care facility of choice
- Contact information for the child's physician
- Contact information of school for school-aged children
- Immunization Records (unless on file at another school)
- Statement of Child's Health from a health-care professional (unless on file at another school)
- Special care needs and allergy information

In addition, parents will be required to sign the registration form, which states they have received and agree to the Operational Policies and Procedures as well as authorization to obtain emergency medical care. Lastly, **Ashley's Playhouse** will take the authorized adult and child(ren)'s photos and parents will set up their fingerprints in Procure.

Discussing Policies and Procedures

Parents are welcome to contact **Ashley's Playhouse's** Director with any questions that they have regarding their children's care at our center or about center's policies, procedures or in general about how the center operates. **Ashley's Playhouse's** Director is normally available during daytime business hours and can also always be reached through email at info@ashleysplayhouseaustin.com.

Parental Visitation

- In general, for the safety of the children and our caregivers, parents are not allowed past the front desk, with the following exceptions:
 - If desired on their first visit, parents can be led on a tour through the facility with their child by a staff member
 - If deemed necessary by management for the safety or well-being of a child
 - Breast-feeding moms are allowed in the infant room and are welcome to use our breast-feeding nook at any time
- **Ashley's Playhouse** is monitored by security cameras. The video from each of these security cameras is saved for at least 30 days and will be reviewed by management if there are any questions or concerns.

Incidents & Accidents

At **Ashley's Playhouse**, precautions will be made to minimize accidents and ensure the safety of the children. We cannot be responsible for injuries that are out of our control which includes, but is not limited to:

- Incidents by one child due to the actions of another child like biting, hitting, pushing, and throwing objects
- Incidents by contact with furniture or objects
- Incidents to fingers from doors and containers
- Accidents while playing indoors and/or in the outdoor play scape

If an injury occurs, after tending to the child, the parent will be contacted depending on the severity of the injury. Parents will need to sign the incident report for all injuries, no matter the severity, when the child is picked up. If an incident occurs by one child due to the actions of another child, we cannot give parents information about whom injured whom for confidentiality purposes, but a report will need to be signed.

Diaper Changing and Potty Training

Diaper Changing

Ashley's Playhouse will change all diapers whether disposable or cloth. Diapers will be available for purchase at the center, or parents may provide diapers/changing supplies for their child. If cloth diapers are being used, we ask parents to bring a bag that closes to store soiled diapers. **Ashley's Playhouse** employees will change diapers according to *Division 2, Diaper Changing of the Minimum Standard for Child-Care Centers*. Caregivers will document diaper changes that take place while children are in our care.

Potty Training

Parents should let **Ashley's Playhouse** know when their child is potty training so we can assist by taking the child to the restroom frequently. We ask parents of children who are potty training to bring extra clothes and materials.

Breastfeeding Children

Ashley's Playhouse has a breastfeeding nook located in the infant room that enables a mother to breastfeed her child while in our care. In addition, parents have the right to provide breast milk for their children. For the safety of the other children in our care, the nursing parent may be required to complete a background check with our center.

Firearms and Other Weapons

- Law enforcement officials who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms or ammunition on the premises of the child-care center.
- For all other persons, firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are prohibited on the premises of the child-care center.

Texas Penal Code

Ashley's Playhouse will inform parents verbally that under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Evacuation routes and relocation plans are posted in every room. The designated relocation area if we need to relocate inside the operation is the Cinema room, as this space has no windows, is an interior room and is easily accessible. If we need to relocate outside the operation, we will follow our emergency evacuation plans and relocate to the empty lot south of the facility towards Main Event. Routine drills will be conducted according to licensing requirements.

Minimum standards and Licensing Inspection Report

A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-care Centers is available for review at **Ashley's Playhouse** upon request. In addition, parents can find it online by going to:
http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/746_Centers.pdf

Local Licensing Office, PRS Child Abuse Hotline and the PRS Website Information

Licensing Office

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/About_Child_Care_Licensing/
14000 Summit Drive, Suite 100
Austin, Texas 78728
(512) 834-3195

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

For information from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on reporting abuse, neglect or exploitation, visit: http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/report_abuse.asp

Abuse Hotline and Website

- Call the Texas Abuse Hotline toll-free at 1-800-252-5400 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, nationwide
- Make your report through their secure web site and you will receive a response within 24 hours: www.txabusehotline.org

Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children

Ashley's Playhouse will ensure annual training is completed by employees to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect of children.

Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Neglect

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex

- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems