

Operational Policies and Procedures



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Austin, TX 78750

Table of Contents

Hours of Operation.....	2
Enrollment procedures.....	3
Parent Code of Conduct.....	3
Custody Situations.....	4
Parental Visitation.....	4
Procedures for Release of Children.....	4
Payment Information	5
Health Check	5
Illness and Exclusion.....	6
Illness	6
Exclusion	6
Incidents & Accidents.....	7
Discipline and Guidance.....	7
Suspension and Expulsion.....	7
Safe Sleep for Infants under 12 months.....	8
Breastfeeding Children.....	8
Diaper Changing and Potty Training.....	8
Diaper Changing	8
Potty Training.....	8
Meals and Food Service Practices	9
Meals	9
Food Service and Preparation.....	9
Dispensing and Handling Medication.....	9
Dispensing	9
Handling.....	9
Medical Emergencies.....	10
Parental Notifications	10
Immunization Requirements.....	11
Tuberculin testing.....	11
Hearing and vision screening requirements	11
Vaccine-preventable diseases for caregivers.....	12
Transportation and Field Trips.....	12

Water Activities	12
Insect Repellent & Sunscreen.....	12
Emergency Preparedness Plan	12
Firearms and Other Weapons.....	13
Texas Penal Code	13
Minimum Standards and Licensing Inspection Report.....	13
Local Licensing Office, PRS Child Abuse Hotline and the PRS Website Information.....	13
Licensing Office.....	13
Reporting Suspected Child Abuse	13
Abuse Hotline and Website	13
Preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children	14
Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse	14
Physical Abuse.....	14
Neglect	14
Sexual Abuse.....	15
Emotional Abuse	15
Policies and Procedures	15

Hours of Operation

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

Ashley's Playhouse is open 7 days a week for drop-in childcare. Our normal hours are as follows:

Monday – Thursday: 7am to 10pm

Friday: 7am to midnight

Saturday: 8am to midnight

Sunday: 11am to 8pm

If there are no children checked-in, **Ashley's Playhouse** reserves the right to close one hour before the posted closing time.

Ashley's Playhouse will always be closed on Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Other holiday hours will be posted in advance.

Enrollment procedures

Complies with Section 746.605 of the Minimum Standards 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 their first visit, parents will also need to complete an Admission 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
- School information for children who attend another daycare or school
- Immunization Records (unless on file at another school)
- Statement of Child's Health from a health care professional (unless on file at another school) stating they are able to attend daycare
- Special care needs and non-food allergies
- Food allergy information including a Food Allergy Emergency Plan signed by the parent and health care professional
- *A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion.*

In addition, parents will be required to sign the admission form, which states they have read and agree to the Operational Policies and Procedures as well as authorization to obtain emergency medical care.

Parent Code of Conduct

Please understand young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. **Ashley's Playhouse** prohibits swearing or cursing in our facility.

Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated as specified by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. **Ashley's Playhouse** has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian.

In the event that a parent is dissatisfied with any situation at **Ashley's Playhouse**, parents are to maintain composure and handle issues professionally with the manager on duty. Conversations that take place at **Ashley's Playhouse** must be developmentally appropriate for the children who are observing and must not be aggressive in tone. Any behavior that places a child at risk will lead to immediate dismissal from **Ashley's Playhouse**.

Ashley's Playhouse will not get involved in situations where parents have different expectations regarding their child's care including but not limited to: diet, sleep, clothing and potty training. Parental decisions about the child's care, health and well-being are to be decided at home.

Custody Situations

Ashley's Playhouse prefers NOT to get involved with custody disputes. **Ashley's Playhouse** will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENSE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.

In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the Austin Police Department will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, **Ashley's Playhouse** has the right to terminate care.

Parental Visitation

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

- In general, for the safety of the children and our caregivers, parents are only allowed to come in the children's play area when accompanied by a staff member.
- Parents may visit the child-care center at any time during our hours of operation to observe their child, program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval.

Procedures for Release of Children

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

- **Ashley's Playhouse** uses a childcare software called Procure to check 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 check in and out.
- Any adult that is listed as an authorized pick-up for the child, but does not have a fingerprint or unique code set up, will be required to provide a valid government issued photo identification 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 feels uncomfortable releasing a child to an individual, the Austin Police Department will be called.

Payment Information

- **Ashley's Playhouse** accepts cash and credit/debit cards. We do not accept checks.
- Payment is due upon pick-up based on the current hourly rate unless parents have a credit card (or banking information) on file, in which case their card will be charged the next *business* day. If a card is placed on file and declined multiple times, **Ashley's Playhouse** reserves the right to not store any payment information and parents will be required to pay each visit upon pick-up or purchase a block (see below).
- Rates are pro-rated to the minute and siblings receive a 40% discount if they attend together. The discount is applied to the oldest child(ren).
- 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 once the balance is depleted. Please see the APH membership form for more details. There are no refunds on membership balances.
- **Ashley's Playhouse** also offers blocks of time for which parents receive 10%-20% off their childcare hourly rates. 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 a child is picked up late multiple times, a \$5 per minute late fee will be charged on the third offense. After three times being picked up late – parents will no longer be allowed to drop-off.

Health Check

Complies with Section 746.123 and 746.501 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

The health and well-being of each child at **Ashley's Playhouse** is of the utmost importance to us, therefore we may conduct a daily health check before the parents leave. A health check is a visual or physical assessment of a child to identify potential concerns about a child's health, including signs or symptoms of illness and injury. 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, 746.3603, 746.3605 and 746.3606 of the Minimum Standards 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 or higher under the armpit
- 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 age group including outdoor play
- 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.

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 area

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 an incident report for all injuries that leave a mark, 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 who injured whom for confidentiality purposes, but a report will need to be signed by both sets of parents.

Discipline and Guidance

Complies with Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance of the Minimum Standards 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 use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:
 - Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 - Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
 - Redirecting behavior using positive statements
 - 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.

Suspension and Expulsion

At **Ashley's Playhouse** the safety of the children and staff are of the utmost importance to us. We adhere to a three strike policy. A strike may be given for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to aggressive or disrespectful behavior towards other children or staff and behavioral issues. Parents will have to sign an incident report when a strike is issued. After 3 strikes, a child will be suspended for 3 months. After a child has been suspended for 3 months and returns, the strike policy is reinstated. If the child receives 3 more strikes, they will be permanently suspended from the facility. **Ashley's Playhouse** reserves the right to bypass this process and suspend or expel a child immediately if the situation merits such action.

Safe Sleep for Infants under 12 months

Complies with Subchapter H, Basic Care Requirements for Infants of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

Ashley's Playhouse follows Infant Sleep Safety Guidelines as outlined in the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers and as outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All cribs at **Ashley's Playhouse** meet the CPSC safety guidelines. Crib compliance documents are on file and can be viewed upon request.

Infants not yet able to turn over on their own must be placed in a face-up sleeping position in the infant's own crib. To avoid suffocation, nothing is allowed in the crib with the infant, including blankets, bottles, and stuffed animals. Sleep positioning devices are prohibited. For any exception to sleep positions and/or positioning devices, parents will need to complete a Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleeping position for the child is medically necessary. Pacifiers are allowed, however straps that are attached to the child's clothing and pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are prohibited. Amber necklaces are also prohibited as they pose a choking hazard.

Breastfeeding Children

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

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. Please label all breast milk with the infant's first name and last initial.

Diaper Changing and Potty Training

Diaper Changing

Ashley's Playhouse changes all diapers (both disposable and cloth) regularly while the children are in our care. Parents must 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 *Subchapter R, Health Practices, Division 2, Diaper Changing of the Minimum Standards 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 regularly. We ask parents of children who are potty training to bring extra clothes and materials.

Meals and Food Service Practices

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

Meals

At **Ashley's Playhouse** parents will have the option to provide their children's food or purchase our breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner. Snacks are scheduled to be served once in the morning, afternoon and evening and are included in the price of service.

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. However some products served at **Ashley's Playhouse** are produced in facilities that may also produce nut products.

Parents always have the option to request that only food from home is given to their children.

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 as monitored by the Health and Human Services Department.

Dispensing and Handling Medication

Complies with Section 746.3803, 746.3805, and 746.3807 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

Dispensing

- **Ashley's Playhouse** will administer medication in its original container when parents give authorization by completing and signing a Medical Authorization Form.
- If a Medical Authorization Form is not signed in advance, 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 in a locked storage container
- Medication will be stored so it does not contaminate food
- **Ashley's Playhouse** will refrigerate medication (if required)

Medical Emergencies

Complies with Section 746.3607 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

For an illness or injury that requires the immediate attention of a health care professional **Ashley's Playhouse** will:

1. Contact emergency medical services if needed (or take the child to the nearest emergency room after we have ensured the supervision of other children in the group);
2. Give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed;
3. Contact the child's parent

Parental Notifications

Complies with Section 746.307 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

In accordance with daycare licensing standards, parents will be notified in the following situations.

- Parents will be notified of less serious injuries when the parent picks the child up from the child-care center. Less serious injuries include, but are not limited to, minor cuts, scratches, and bites from other children requiring first-aid treatment by employees.
- For more serious situations, parents will be notified after ensuring the safety of the child, if the child:
 - Is injured and the injury requires medical attention by a health care professional;
 - Has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the child-care center as specified above in the Illness and Exclusion section;
 - Has been involved in any situation that placed the child at risk. For example, a caregiver forgetting a child in a center vehicle or not preventing a child from wandering away from the child-care center unsupervised; or
 - Has been involved in any situation that renders the child-care center unsafe, such as a fire, flood, or damage to the child-care center as a result of severe weather.
- All parents of children in attendance of the child-care center will be notified in writing and within 48 hours of becoming aware that a child in our care or an employee has contracted a communicable disease deemed notifiable by the Texas Department of State Health Services.
- All parents of children in attendance of child-care center will receive written notice within 48 hours when there is an outbreak of lice or other infestation in the group.

Immunization Requirements

Complies with Section 746.613, 746.615, 746.623, and 746.625 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

- **Ashley's Playhouse** is required to obtain a copy of the child's immunization record by the date of admission as specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services.
 - 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 unless it is generated from an electronic health record system in which case we just need the clinic contact information
 - 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
 - For parents that cannot provide an immunization record and/or are exempt, an affidavit will need to be provided in accordance with 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

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

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

Hearing and vision screening requirements

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

- Hearing and vision 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 hearing or vision screening conflicts with the tenets or practices of a church or religious denomination of which the affiant is an adherent or member.

Vaccine-preventable diseases for caregivers

Complies with Section 746.3611 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

At **Ashley's Playhouse**, caregivers are encouraged, but not required to obtain vaccinations for vaccine-preventable diseases. Employees are required to wear gloves while changing diapers or dealing with any bodily fluid and wash their hands to prevent the spread of diseases.

Transportation and Field Trips

Complies with Subchapter N, Field Trips and Subchapter X, Transportation of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

Parents are required to fill out a transportation form if they wish for their children to participate in any of the following optional activities:

- After School Pick-up from participating schools and daycares
- Field trips
- Infant buggy rides for children ages 6 months and older

Water Activities

Complies with Section 746.5015 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

During the summer months, **Ashley's Playhouse** may offer optional water days in which children play in the sprinklers outside on the playground. Parents who wish for their children to participate will need to sign a permission form that includes their sunscreen preference.

Insect Repellent & Sunscreen

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

Ashley's Playhouse supplies insect repellent and sunscreen for parents to apply to their children if they desire. Due to the number of children and wide array of desires from parents, **Ashley's Playhouse** will not apply insect repellent nor sunscreen to the children with the exception of water days (see section above) in which a specific permission form will need to be signed by parents.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Complies with Section 746.5201 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

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.

Firearms and Other Weapons

Complies with Section 746.3707 of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers

- Peace officers as listed in §2.12 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and security officers commissioned by the Texas Private Security Board who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty may have firearms and 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

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

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.

Minimum Standards and Licensing Inspection Report

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

A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers as well as the most recent Licensing inspection report 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/child_care/

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

Licensing Office

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care/
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

Policies and Procedures

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

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 the center's operational policies and procedures. **Ashley's Playhouse's** director is normally available during daytime business hours and can also always be reached through email at info@ashleysplayhouseaustin.com.

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 to review.