

# **Rachel's Little House**

1201 S. 4<sup>th</sup>

Canadian, TX 79014

806-323-6261

## **Parent Policies Handbook**

Revised 10/16/17

## **Mission Statement**

Rachel's Little House believes in a high-quality program designed to meet the needs of the whole child. Our commitment to nurture each child's active learning, through a well-trained staff, makes us an extension of the home and family.

## **History**

Rachel's Little House (hereinafter referred to as "the Center") is a non-profit facility, established under the guidance of Rachel Snyder in 1971 as a mission project of the Presbyterian Women's Association. The Center is under the direction of a Board of Director's, which represents a cross-section of the community with leaders from various professions and expertise.

## **Philosophy**

The program is designed to meet the needs of the "whole child". This includes the areas of social, physical, emotional, cognitive, creative, and language development. The environment is carefully planned to provide quality care and education for young children. This approach recognizes the uniqueness of each child and provides for individualized experiences to help children reach their maximum potential. Young children learn differently than older children; therefore, young children are given opportunities to:

- Practice decision-making by selecting activities from a variety of learning centers (books, home-living, discovery, blocks, and manipulatives).
- Express themselves creatively through art, music, dramatic play, movement, and use of unstructured materials.
- Develop appropriate concepts and thinking skills through the exploration of a wide variety of concrete materials.
- Experience warm positive interactions with children and adults.
- Verbalize feelings in a supportive, accepting environment that encourages independence and self control.
- Enjoy and participate in language experiences through conversations, stories, puppets, books, songs, discovery play, and creative dramatics.

- Participate in many physical activities to develop fine and gross motor skills through puzzles, discovery play, arts and crafts, climbing equipment, exercise, tricycles, and balls.

The daily schedule is organized to meet the children's needs for a balance of active and quiet play, large and small group interaction, and indoor and outdoor activities.

## **Enrollment Procedures**

The Center welcomes families of all racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. The Center accepts children with special needs provided they can benefit from our program and our staff can effectively work with them. If your child has special needs, please inform us prior to enrollment so that a plan of care may be initiated for your child.

Enrollment forms may be picked up at the Center from the Director or staff on duty. Upon full completion of the enrollment forms listed below, the child/children will be enrolled.

- State Admission Form
- Discipline and Guidance Form
- Biting and Aggressive Behavior Policy Form
- Doctor's Statement for any child not enrolled in public school
- Copy of the child's current immunization Record
- Photo/Video Release Form

During the enrollment process, the director will ask the parent/guardian for a four digit code to be used to drop off and pick up the child. This code must be entered to access the building each day. Please be sure to use your code even if the door is open as this process is used to sign your child/children in and out each day. Upon arriving to drop off your child/children or pick them up you will use the keypad by:

- Selecting the button that says 'child',
- Enter your 4 digit code, and
- Select 'ok'.

After you have completed this 3 step process, the door will unlock allowing you to enter the building. Should you need assistance with this, please press the intercom button with the blue light to the left of the keypad.

## Hours of Operation

The Center is open from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Center will be closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day After Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day

Any additional days will be posted at the center and written notification of days closed will be sent home.

Parents of children remaining at the center after 6:00 p.m. will be charged a \$10.00 late fee. If a parent does not call within the hour and the Center's efforts to reach the parent or emergency contacts listed by 7:00 p.m. are unsuccessful, DFPS will be notified.

## Tuition

The fees charged are set where the Center's income and fundraising efforts offset our monthly expenses for building upkeep, toys, operating supplies, staff and administrative costs. The Center makes every effort to keep rates as low as possible; however, due to rising costs and the Center's efforts to maintain a quality environment for the children, rates are subject to change. Notification of any changes would be given, in writing, two weeks in advance.

Invoices for regular day care tuition will be placed in your child's cubby every Monday. For preschool only, the invoices will be given out monthly.

Supply fees are due at the beginning of each semester:

- Infants - 3 Yr. Olds: \$25.00/semester
- Pre-K: \$50/semester

This supply fee will be invoiced with your monthly statement in September and January.

Payments should be made in a timely manner following invoices. Payments must be made in advance of care.

## Rates

	8 Weeks - 18 months	19 months - School Age	Pre K Only 8:30 - 11:30	After - School Care
Full Day Care	\$160/week	\$25/day	\$150/month	\$12/day
Half Day Care		\$19/day		
Drop - In Care	\$38/day Only if space is available	Same Rates As Listed Above		

If tuition is not paid in a timely manner following your invoice, your 4 digit access code will be deactivated and care will be suspended until your bill is paid in full. If your 4 digit code is deactivated for non-payment, please push the intercom button to the left of the keypad for assistance. Payment can be made at the director's office and your access code will be reactivated.

## 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.

The Center staff 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, and
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There will be **NO** harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment,
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training,
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child,
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument,
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth,
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child,
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language,
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed, and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

In addition, staff will not reward good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind.

## **Health Policies**

The State of Texas and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) requires all children enrolled to have a current immunization record on file at the Center, unless the child is enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program or public school.

If the child is enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program or public school, the parent can provide:

- a copy of the immunization record, or
- a signed statement that the child's immunization record is current and on file at the pre-kindergarten program or school that the child attends. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the pre-kindergarten program or school listed in the statement.

In addition to the immunization record, the Center must also have a written statement, from a health-care professional who has examined the child within the past 12 months, indicating the child is able to take part in the child-care program.

### **Vaccine Preventable Diseases:**

At this time, the Center does not require any specific vaccinations for caregiver's; however, we strongly encourage them to have an annual Flu Shot to protect themselves and those present at the Center. In addition, caregivers that are routinely involved with

the infants and toddlers are encouraged to get the Whooping Cough vaccination. To help prevent the spread of illnesses, hand washing is performed routinely throughout the day, as well as, wearing protective gloves while handling bodily fluids. This includes but is not limited to, diapering, administering first aid, and wiping noses. Caregivers will remove gloves and wash hands immediately after each task to prevent cross-contamination to other children

## **Illness**

### **Exclusion for Illness:**

Any child showing symptoms of illness, such as, fever, diarrhea, red eyes with discharge, a rash, severe coughing, etc., will be isolated and a parent/guardian will be notified. The child must be picked up immediately. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be notified.

Any child who has been kept home by the parent or sent home by the Center with an armpit temperature of 100 degrees or higher, or shows symptoms of illness, must remain at home for a full 24 hours after fever and symptoms have subsided.

### **Communicable Diseases:**

Parents will be notified when a child has been exposed to a communicable disease within the Center. Notices will be posted at the front door and at each classroom door throughout the center. Parents should likewise notify the Center when children are exposed to a communicable disease outside the Center.

Readmission of a child recovered from a communicable disease will be upon written approval of the child's physician. This statement must be given to the Center Director and placed in the child's file.

### **Medication:**

Due to stringent state guidelines on administering medications in childcare settings, medications will not be administered by the Center. If a child requires medication while in care, the parent or their emergency contact person will need to make arrangements to go to the Center to dispense the medication to the child.

## Vision and Hearing Screening

All children enrolled in the Center that are 4 years of age, and not enrolled in public school, will have their hearing and vision screened by the nurse at Canadian Elementary School. The results of the screening will be shared with the parents and kept on file at the Center.

## Safety

### **Accidents:**

Parents will be advised of any and all accidents as well as anything unusual concerning their child. Accidents requiring first aid while at the Center will be recorded on an Accident Report Form.

In cases of an extreme emergency, the parent will be contacted by phone. If the parent cannot be reached, or depending on the severity of the accident, the child will be taken to the emergency room of the Hemphill County Hospital.

### **Release of Children:**

For the safety of the children, parents or authorized persons are required to use the front doors (main entrance) for entry and exit of the building when dropping off and picking up children. Children **may not** be picked up or dropped off using the back doors and playground exits.

The Center will release children **ONLY** to the parent or person(s) designated by the parent on the enrollment form.

In an emergency when a parent must ask someone else to pick up the child, the parent **MUST** inform the school by note or phone call. The person picking up the child **MUST** show his/her drivers' license to the Center staff for identification.

A child will not be released to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

The Center cannot deny a custodial parent listed on the enrollment form from visiting the center or leaving the center with their child/children without a Court Order stating otherwise.

**Intruders:**

If a person gains entry into the Center who poses an immediate threat to the children or staff, each room will be alerted by receiving a "code red" warning over the intercom phone system. At that time, all children will be relocated to the safe room. The director or the person in charge will divert the intruder away from the children and the police will be called.

**Gang Free Zone:**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of the center is considered a gang-free zone where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect:**

To help prevent child abuse, you need to understand what it is. It's any mistreatment of a child that results in harm or injury.

Types of abuse include:

Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse, and Neglect

Children who are abused might show physical signs or sudden changes in their behavior or school performance. These signs don't prove that children are being abused, but they could be a signal that the children or their families need help.

General signs of abuse and/or neglect in children include but are not limited to:

- Nervousness around adults or afraid of certain adults,
- Reluctant to go home,
- Very passive and withdrawn or aggressive and disruptive,
- Tired a lot, or they might complain of nightmares or not sleeping well,
- Fearful and anxious,
- Missing school a lot,
- Begging for food, stealing food, or stealing money for food,
- Lacking needed medical or dental care,
- Being frequently dirty,
- Using alcohol or other drugs,
- Saying there is no one at home to take care of them.

### Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Get to know your neighbors and communicate with them regularly.
- Ask for help when you are stressed.
- Offer help to families when you know they are under stress.
- Seek out faith leaders, doctors, and teachers for community resources.
- Be involved in your child's life and maintain open communication with them.

More detailed information about recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect, as well as, community resources can be found at [HelpAndHope.org](http://HelpAndHope.org) or in our parent education area located in the front hallway of the Center.

The Center is committed to protecting the well-being of children, and therefore our staff are trained annually in recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect. Any evidence of unusual bruises, marks, burns, or unusual behavior will be noted in writing by the Center's staff and will be placed in the child's file. Additionally, we are under ethical and legal obligation to report instances of suspected abuse or neglect. All suspicious indicators will be documented and reported. The center is required by law to cooperate with any investigation of child abuse and neglect. It is not our responsibility or intention to offer interpretation or explanation of our observations - the investigation is handled by the State. Failure of educators to report is a crime.

Parents of children who have been a victim of child abuse or neglect are encouraged to communicate their needs to the director in order for a partnership to be formed and the family can be provided every resource available.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, contact the:

**Texas Abuse Hotline 1-800-252-5400** or report online at [TexasAbuseHotline.org](http://TexasAbuseHotline.org).

## **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

### **Fire and Bomb Threat Evacuation Procedure:**

There will be a long continuous blast from the fire alarm. Children will be evacuated according to the diagram posted in each room or as directed by the police. In the event of fire, the children will be escorted to Canadian Elementary, 500 Dogwood Street. In the event of a bomb threat, the children will be escorted to Canadian Church of Christ, 1013 South Fourth Street.

**Tornado and Earthquake Procedure:**

In the event of a tornado or earthquake, the children will be moved into the safe room/cafeteria, located in the center of the building.

**Blizzard and Power Failure Procedure:**

If public schools close due to inclement weather, the Center will be closed also. In the case of a power failure for an extended period of time, parents will be notified to pick their children up immediately.

In all emergency situations, parents will be contacted following the children's secured safety. Each caregiver will have a list of the children in their care and will conduct a head count upon leaving the room, during transfer, and as soon as everyone has reached the safe relocation space. The director or person in charge will print the emergency contact report with each child's emergency contacts prior to leaving the Center for any emergency. If there is an electrical outage during the emergency, then each caregiver will take the emergency contact list with them which is located in each classroom. Staff will carry cell phones in order to communicate with each other, emergency personnel, and parents. Snacks, water, and activities will be provided to the children after safety has been secured to reduce anxiety and fears during the emergency. All staff will remain with their children until they have been picked up safely by their parents.

**Center Closings:**

If Canadian ISD is closed for inclement weather, the Center will be closed also. Closure will be posted on the Rachel's Little House Facebook page as well as the The Canadian Record Facebook page. In addition, if Canadian ISD closes for illness, such as a flu epidemic, the Center will also close.

## Meal and Snack Policy

All meals meet the nutritional requirements as set forth by the Nutrition and Food Service in the Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers, which follows the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Menus and snacks are planned and prepared with variety, quality, and tastes of young children in mind. The menu will be posted monthly on the Parent Board in the foyer, in each classroom, in the kitchen, and a copy sent home in your child's cubby.

The Center's snacks are fruits, raw vegetables, crackers, cheese, cereals, etc. Sugary food will be avoided. The Center serves only 100% fruit juice, milk, or water.

Since the Center follows certain guidelines to prepare healthy meals, we ask that parents follow these same guidelines when sending a lunch from home for your child. Suggestions for healthy lunches prepared at home can be given upon request or information can be found in the Parent Education area in the front hallway. The Center will always have milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables available for those who bring a lunch from home. The Center ask that you place an ice pack in your child's lunch box for foods that need to remain cold as the Center cannot guarantee room in the refrigerator on site. Foods sent from home can be heated in the microwave by staff at the Center.

**Food Allergies:**

If a child has food allergies, the Center must be notified in writing by the child's physician, including the symptoms resulting from the allergy, and the remedies and precautions to be taken. Food allergies will be posted in the kitchen as well as the child's classroom.

**Birthdays and Classroom Celebrations:**

Throughout the year, parents may bring snacks or foods from home for classroom celebrations, birthdays, or other occasions. Food brought from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits/veggies, commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers, or foods prepared in a commercially licensed kitchen.

**Breastfeeding**

Mothers are welcome to come to the Center to breastfeed at any time. A rocking chair is provided in the conference room to provide a comfortable and private setting. In addition, parents are welcome to send breast milk labeled with the date and child's name. Upon request, community resources for breastfeeding education and support can be given.

**Food Education Resources:**

Handouts regarding how to introduce solid foods to infants as well as which foods to avoid, information on healthy foods for children, and information on popular food allergies are available in the Parent Education area in the front hallway. Please let us know if you are interested in any of this information.

**Absence Policy**

If your child is enrolled full-time (attends 5 days/week on a regular basis), and will be absent, please call the Center at 806-323-6261 to notify us of the absence. This allows

us to make adjustments in our staffing an/or number of drop-ins that we can accommodate.

## Infant Policies

Because parents are the most important people in an infant's life, the Center will provide and request feedback from the parent's on a regular basis. Parent's are required to complete an 'Infant Care Instructions' Form every 30 days. Since infant's needs change so often during the first year, this form is used by the Center to meet your child's daily needs, such as feeding, diapering, napping, and playing schedule.

Parents are required to provide the following supplies:

- Diapers,
- Wipes,
- Formula (prepared or powder form and staff can mix), or
- Breastmilk can be sent with child's name and date,
- Bottles with first name and last initial,
- Baby Food,
- Diapering or skin creams needed and listed on the Infant Care Instructions Form
- Extra sets of clothing.

When your child is ready for table foods, we will integrate your child into our Center provided meals.

Parents of infant's are **REQUIRED** to give one weeks notice prior to termination of services. You will be charged for the final week of care leading up to the termination date whether your child attends or not. The termination form can be picked up from the Director's office.

## General Information

### **Clothing:**

Please dress your child in clothing that allows them to be comfortable during all daily activities and changes in weather. Closed toe shoes such as tennis shoes are preferred to protect feet and prevent tripping during outside play. You must send a jacket/coat during cool/cold weather as we will play outside even in low temperatures.

A change of clothing can be needed for a number of reasons, such as bathroom accidents, messy play activities, etc. For the comfort and health of your child, the Center requires all children to have a complete change of clothing at the Center at all times. This includes pants, shirts, and socks. Potty trained children should have at least (2) extra pairs of underwear. All items belonging to your child **MUST** be labeled with their name.

On the rare occasion that your child has an accident and does not have an extra set of clothing, the Center keeps a limited supply available to borrow. Please keep in mind that it may not always be weather appropriate due to size and selection available may vary. Please wash and **return** all borrowed clothing promptly.

### **Cubbies:**

Each child enrolled has their own cubby labeled with their name for their personal belongings. This is for backpacks, coats, and napping items. For the safety of the children, please do not leave any medications or ointments in the backpacks, as they are stored at the child's level.

Please check your child's cubby each day for important notes, weekly invoices, and your child's artwork that is ready to go home.

### **Outside Play:**

The Center provides active play outside twice each day unless the temperature or wind chill is below 32 degrees. Check the daily schedule in your child's classroom to see what time is scheduled for outside play. If a child is not well enough to go outside, he or she is probably not well enough to be at the Center. Due to the Center's staffing, we are not able to have a staff member stay inside with one child.

### **Parent Conferences:**

Our teacher's first concern and responsibility is supervising the children. If you need to visit at length with the teacher, please schedule a conference. In addition, discussions involving the child should not be discussed in the child's presence but should be held in private.

### **Field Trips:**

On occasion, field trips are scheduled for children 5 years of age and older. Field trip information will be posted at the entrance of your child's classroom and in your child's cubby. Parents must give written permission for their child to attend.

**Transportation:**

When transporting children to and from the Center, on field trips, and other activities, children are required to wear seat belts. In accordance with state law, booster seats will be used for any child requiring one based on height and weight. Only children 5 years of age and above will be transported.

**Water Activities:**

During the summer session, water activities are scheduled. The one to four year old children are allowed to play in sprinklers under Staff supervision at the Center.

Children that are 5 and older go swimming at the City Pool. The Center will have a certified lifeguard on duty at all times that the children are present at the city pool. Parents must sign the permission statement for water activities on their child's enrollment form and the weekly permission form if they would like for their child to participate.

**Screen Time:**

No screen time is offered at the Center. The Center feels it is best to engage the children in hands-on activities while in our care.

**Parent Involvement:**

Parents are encouraged to visit the Center at any time during your child's day to observe your child, the Center's operation, or participate in daily activities. You do not have to call or set an appointment, you are always welcome.

**Messages:**

Speaking to Center staff in person or by phone is the best way to communicate; however, if this is not possible and you need to relay a message to the Center, please send a signed note and give it to the Director or teacher. Verbal messages brought by the child are sometimes misunderstood.

**Birthdays:**

A child's birthday will be recognized by singing. Parents may provide simple refreshments to be shared with the class during snack time. Please refer to our [Meal and Snack Policy](#) as certain foods are prohibited. You must make arrangements with the teacher 24 hours in advance.

**Lost and Found:**

All items left at the Center will be placed in a basket located in the Director's office.

**Animals:**

On occasion, parent's may bring certain animals to the center to share with the children. Prior to any animal being brought into the Center, parent's must make arrangements with the director as some animals are prohibited for health and safety reasons. In addition, documentation of current animal vaccinations and a statement of health from a local veterinarian would be required.

**Smoking Policy**

Smoking will not be permitted in any area of the building or playground spaces.

**Changes That Must Be Reported:**

At enrollment time, you provide information about you and your child on the enrollment records. Any changes to this information **MUST** be reported to the Center. It ensures that accurate information is available during an emergency so that the child's needs can be met. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Changes in the Parent's contact numbers,
- Changes in the Emergency Contact Person,
- Changes in the authorized persons for children to be released, or
- Changes in the child's physician or health needs, such as allergies, etc.

Besides reporting the above changes as needed, at least once per year, enrollment forms must be reviewed for updates or a new form may be completed. This ensures the Center's records contain the most up to date information.

For your convenience, a Change of Information Form can be found in the Parent Education area in the front hallway. You may fill out this form and place it in the white drop box outside of the Director's office at any time.

**Termination Policy**

The Center believes that meeting each child's needs requires teamwork between the child, parent, teacher, and administrative staff. The Center reserves the right to discontinue services if the parent demonstrates an unwillingness to comply with Center policies or to work with staff in a cooperative manner. Upon termination, any credits will be refunded.

**Parent Termination:**

The Center asks that you give one weeks notice when withdrawing your child from care.

**Center Termination:**

The Center strives to provide the best child care possible to the children enrolled. To do this, however, it may become necessary for the Center in its sole discretion to terminate a child for one of the following reasons:

- Needs of the individual child cannot be served,
- Parents do not comply with the Parent Policies Handbook, or
- Behavior of the child is deemed detrimental to the other children at the Center.

## Parent Questions/Concerns

If you, as a parent, have any questions or concerns regarding the policies and procedures of the Center, we encourage you to first contact your child's teacher. If further consideration is needed, call the Director at (806) 323-6261 or stop by the Director's office. If your concern is not adequately addressed by the Director, you may then request contact information for the Board of Directors.

The Center is licensed by the TDFPS and is in compliance with their rules and regulations. Parents may review the licensing minimum standards at any time. Our most recent licensing inspection is always posted on the parent board in the front foyer. Previous TDFPS reports are always kept in the Director's office and can be viewed upon request. If you feel a grievance is not being addressed, parents may contact the TDFPS office at:

Main Number: 806-358-6211

Intake Line: 806-354-5307

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

## Policy Changes

Policies will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. Parents will be notified in writing of any changes to the Parent Policies.