

# **Graceful Journey Learning Center**

## **Operational Policies**

**1804 Helena ave.**

**Nederland, Texas 77627**

**409-344-9199**

**Alita Carr, Owner/Director**

## **Our Mission**

Graceful Journey Learning Center focuses on the individuality and uniqueness of each child. We provide a safe and loving Christian environment that allows each child to develop at his/her own pace. Activities are planned to encourage self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity, and self-discipline, as well as assisting in the development of the child's social and emotional health.

## **Our Goal**

For each child and their family to feel that Graceful Journey is a home away from home. We want to give each child a place to enjoy learning and to feel special and loved.

## **Hours of Operation**

Graceful Journey Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am until 6:00pm. We are open year-round. Please notify the office if your child will be absent. All children must be dropped off no later than 9:00am.

## **Enrollment Procedures**

On the first day of attendance each child must have:

- A filled-out Enrollment Packet
- Up-to-date immunization records
- A Health Statement, signed by a physician **within the last 12 months.**
- A food/insect Allergy Emergency Plan, signed by a physician, if required
- A TB skin test (if currently required by local health department)

**For safety reasons, all enrollment information must be updated as changes are made**

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## **Tuition & Fees**

Enrollment Fee: Per Family (non-refundable) **\$75**

Supply Fee: Due Bi-Annually January and July **\$100**  
All ages

Curriculum Fee: 18 months through 5 years. Due no later than the first Friday in August. We begin teaching the fall curriculum the day after Labor Day until the end of May each year.

**Book Fees will be announced yearly since they periodically change.**

### Weekly Fees:

Infants through 17 months **\$185**

18 months through 5 years **\$165**

School-Age after school **\$80**

Full Time **\$165**

Drop-In Fee: Subject to availability. You must call at least 24 hours in advance to make arrangements. The rate is per child. **\$50**

Family Discount: There is no family discount for a multiple child family. The same quality of care is provided for all children.

Vacation Credit: We do not provide vacation credits. Tuition fees are vital to our program and provide the opportunity to pay our teachers above competitive wages, which reduces the turnover rate of staff caring for your children.

Unenrollment: You must give a (2) notice if you decide to unenroll your child.

Fee Policy: Tuition is due in advance. The weekly fee will be auto drafted on the Friday of the week **before** you use the childcare center. If the auto-draft fails, there will be an additional \$35 fee added to your account. If your account is not kept current, your child may be dropped from enrollment.

If you would like to pay monthly instead of weekly, your monthly fees will be auto drafted on the first Friday of each month. You will also receive a \$10 discount each month.

You are responsible for the weekly fee whether your child attends or not. This holds their spot. We do not give credit for any absenteeism including illnesses.

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### **Late Pick-Up Fees**

Children must be picked up by 6:00 pm every day. Our license ends at 6:00 pm and we do not stay late. If you are not here on time, there will be a \$2.00 per minute late fee charged to you. You must pay this fee when you arrive to pick your child up. We have the right to dismiss your child if you are always late picking them up.

### **Re-Enrollment Fee**

Should your child drop out of enrollment and then re-enroll within a time frame of 4 weeks or less, you will be charged a re-enrollment fee of \$75.

### **Refunds**

If you are due a refund for any reason, you must wait 10 working days to receive it.

### **Holidays**

The center is closed for the following holidays:

- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after

- Christmas and New Year's (depending how the holidays fall) Will usually close 2 days for each of holiday.
- Teacher In-Service Day (to be announced)

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Any holiday falling on a Saturday will be observed on the Friday before. Any holiday falling on a Sunday will be observed on the Monday after the holiday. Graceful Journey may close a full week between Christmas and New Year. You will be notified in advance.

### **Dress Code**

Please send your child in clean and comfortably fitting clothes. Closed toe shoes are preferred.

Please do not send your child wearing jewelry. This is dangerous if the jewelry falls off and becomes a choking hazard.

**Please make sure your child's name is on all articles of clothing including hats, jackets, sweaters, and on backpacks.**

We are not responsible for soiled, torn, or lost clothes.

### **Rest Time**

All children have a rest/quiet time every day. For all children 12 months through 5 years, parents must provide a waterproof mat no larger than the regular Kinder mats. Parents must also provide a small blanket and can bring a travel size pillow if your child would like one. The blanket and pillow must be brought home every Friday to be

washed. The state does now allow nap mats with any tears on them. It is the parent's responsibility to replace torn mats immediately.

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### **Safe Sleep**

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, unless you have a completed Sleep Exception Form that includes a signed statement from a health-care professional stating that a different sleep position for the child is medically necessary. All cribs must have a firm, flat mattress that snugly fits the crib, is waterproof, and that is specifically designed to use with that crib, all cribs must have sheets that fit snugly and do not present an entanglement problem. All cribs must also be completely bare. This means no blankets, toys, pillows, etc.

### **Parental Notification**

Any time there is a change that will affect children at Graceful Journey, parents will be notified ahead of time.

### **Gang Free Zone**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang free zone, where criminal activity is subject to a harsher penalty.

### **Visiting Procedures**

Graceful Journey Learning Center has an open-door policy. This means that parents may visit any time. However, your child will adjust more quickly if you

drop them off, give them good-bye hugs and kisses and leave. We suggest that you do not visit during their rest time.

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Parents/Guardians are encouraged to participate in any or all activities. This includes but is not limited to holiday parties, birthdays, etc. Please let the director know if you would like to volunteer for special days, parties, etc.

### **Breast Feeding**

Graceful Journey Learning Center has an open policy for breast feeding mothers. We provide comfortable seating for mothers that breast feed. As a parent, you have the right to breast feed in our facility or provide breast milk for your child.

### **Car Seats**

Any parent/guardian that brings a child into our facility in a car seat or carrier must remove the child themselves from the car seat or carrier.

We do not have a lot of room to store these, so we encourage you not to leave them here during the day.

### **Release of a Child**

Parents must:

- Accompany the child/children into the center each day.
- Check the child/children in and out using the QR code posted around the center.
- Walk the child to his/her appropriate classroom.
- Make sure to leave the child with a staff member. Do not allow a child to walk to his/her classroom alone.

- Check the child/children out at the end of the day using the QR code posted around the center.
- Make sure the child's teacher knows they are leaving.

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We will not release a child without **Prior** expressed consent from the parent enrolling the child. If a parent needs someone else to pick up their child; Graceful Journey must be notified in advance. This person must provide valid picture identification to protect the child and the parent and to avoid any misunderstanding.

**Only adults 18 years of age or older will be allowed to pick up children.**

## Curriculum

All classes will have a curriculum to follow, and teachers may supplement additional materials that coincide with the academic scope and or theme of the month. We help children develop Christian values to so we can help grow a community of responsible citizens through body, mind, and spirit.

## Supplies Needed from Home

Label every item brought from home with first and last name. **We are not responsible for lost items brought from home. Especially if your child's name is not on the item.**

Ages Birth through 12 months:

- Disposable diapers (at least 6 or 8 per day)
- Diaper Wipes
- Pacifier (if needed)
- Baby Food & Cereal (if needed)



- Prepared Bottles (A different clean bottle for each feeding, must have a cap on all bottles, and your child's first name and at least initial of last name)
- At least 2 changes of clothes
- Powder or Lotion (if needed)
- Infant Care Instruction Sheet (Included in enrollment packet. Must be filled out completely, kept up to date, signed and dated, and reviewed with the caregiver every 30 days. This is required by the state).

*Reminder: The Minimum Standards of the state of Texas requires all infants not yet able to turn over on their own to be placed in a face up sleeping position, unless the child's parent has a physician fill out a sleep exception form. This is to prevent SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). SIDS is the major cause of death in babies between one and four months old. If an infant is born with a birth defect, often spits up after eating, or has a breathing problem, a different sleep position may be recommended.*

Ages 13 months through 5 years:

- Waterproof sleeping mat
- Diapers/Pull ups (if needed)
- Diaper Wipes (if needed)
- Small blanket and travel size pillow if desired
- Complete change of clothes (including shirt, underwear, pants/shorts, socks, and shoes)

### **Prohibited Outside Items**

Please do not send expensive, irreplaceable items to the center. No jewelry, toys, candy, soda, money etc.

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### **Meals**

Graceful Journey will provide a morning snack from 8:00 am until 9:00 am and Pm Snack from 2:30 pm until 3:30 pm. **We will not provide lunch.** Parents are responsible for their child's lunch every day. Please send your child's lunch in a lunch kit with and ice pack and a thermos or drink of some kind (no soda please). We will heat your child's lunch in a microwave if needed.

Please put your child's name on their lunch kit or lunch.

### **Water Activities**

Children will occasionally participate in age-appropriate water activities at the facility. Such as sprinklers etc. This will be done with proper supervision and parent's permission.

### **Transportation**

Children will only be transported if there is a medical emergency. Parents will be notified immediately.

### **Threatening Conditions and Evacuation Information**

In the event of severe weather conditions or a notice that the area must be evacuated due to dangerous weather, parents will be notified immediately to come and pick up their child/children.

**We will follow the Nederland Independent School District for severe weather closures.**

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

If Graceful Journey must evacuate the property due to an emergency, we will relocate across the street at the carwash. We will assemble in the far back corner of the property where it is safe and out of traffic. All parents will be notified immediately.

Graceful Journey practices emergency drills with the children throughout the year. We must have a monthly fire drill, practice bad weather drills, and stranger danger drills 4 times per year.

### **Sunscreen and Mosquito Repellent**

Graceful Journey will not provide sunscreen or mosquito repellent for any children. If you would like to have either of these things applied to your child, you must provide it, with your child's name on it, and a note stating when and where to apply, signed and dated by you.

### **Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity**

When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. It builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety; these are just a few of the benefits.

- Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity including supervised Tummy Time.

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- Toddler age children will participate in a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.
- Pre-school age children will participate in a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

This will include:

- Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits
- Two or more structured or Teacher-Led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

### **Pest Control**

A licensed pest control company does routine pest control.

### **Animals**

We do not allow any animals in our facility or on our playground. Please leave your pets in your vehicle when dropping off or picking up your child/children.

### **Immunization Requirements**

Children must be current on their immunizations on the first day of attendance. If your child is not up to date due to an illness, a written document from a

health care professional must be provided stating why they are behind and when they are scheduled for completion.

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If you choose not to vaccinate your child, we must have a notarized affidavit for exemption. You must use the form issued by the state and it must be turned in before your child's first day of attendance. You can download this form at [corequest.dshs.texas.gov](http://corequest.dshs.texas.gov). A tuberculosis skin test is not required for your child to attend our facility.

### **Vision and Hearing Screening**

The Special Senses and Communicable Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36 requires a screening or a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems for the following children who are enrolled in a childcare center.

1. First time enrollees who are four years of age or older and all children enrolled in a childcare center who are 4 years of age by September 1 of each year prior to the completion of the first semester of enrollment or within 120 calendar days of enrollment whichever is longest, or evidence of screening conducted one year prior to enrollment.
2. Each child who is in the first, third, fifth, or seventh grade must complete a screening examination within the school year.

Proof of the individual vision and hearing screenings must be on file at the center.

## **Medical Emergencies**

A medical emergency form is mandatory for each child in the center. This includes a parent/guardian signature allowing medical attention for the child while they are in our care, plus the name, address, and phone number of the child's physician, and parent's choice of a hospital if needed. Please make sure all allergies (food, drugs, or chemicals) your child may have been listed on the enrollment form.

**Graceful Journey will not be held responsible for allergic reactions caused by lack of information or misinformation.**

In the event of an injury or accident to a child, we will:

1. First tend to the child
2. Call 911 if necessary, and then
3. Immediately contact you by phone

An incident/accident report will be filled out for any type of injury. You will be required to sign the form. A copy of the report will be given to you and a copy will be put in your child's file.

## **Illness/Diseases**

Each time your child is taken to a doctor or clinic, please ask for a doctor's release. This must be signed by a medical professional stating that your child is well and can attend a childcare facility.

If your child is not feeling well, has a temperature of 100 or above, vomiting, diarrhea, or any other extreme condition, a parent will be notified immediately for pick up.

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If a parent cannot be reached, we will call the other emergency contacts on the child's enrollment form. Please make sure home, work, and cell phone numbers are always kept current.

According to state law, ill children will not be allowed to remain in the facility. This is to protect them and the other students.

If a child is sent home, he/she cannot return to the center until 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided. He/she must be free of symptoms without medication masking them.

Please do not give your child fever relief medication before bringing them to the center. Repeated incidents of this can result in dismissal from the facility.

### **Communicable Diseases**

Communicable diseases common to children are carefully watched for, including head lice, chicken pox, hand foot and mouth disease, etc. If there is an outbreak in the child's class of any communicable illness or disease, parents will be informed so that children can be observed closely for symptoms.

**Please notify us if your child has a contagious illness or disease. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.**

*In the event your child has head lice, we have a **No-Nit** policy. This means the child cannot return until all nits (eggs) are removed. Someone from Graceful Journey office staff must check the child's head before they are able to be dropped off.*

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### **Procedure for Dispensing Medication**

If a child needs medication during the day, a parent/guardian must fill out an Authorization for Dispensing Medication form.

All prescription medications must be in the original prescription labeled container it came in.

All over the counter medications must be age appropriate on the label for your child's age.

Infant room students can give the form and medication to the caregivers in that room.

All other student's medication should be dropped at the front office with an office staff member.

We try to limit breathing treatments to just once a day.

If your child is on a twice a day medication, please try to give it at home.

If your child is on three times a day medication, we will give one dose at the center.

**It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ask for the child's medication at the end of the day. The center will not hold a General Epi-Pen on location.**

**An epi-pen will require a prescription and Allergy Action Plan.**

### **Discipline Policy**



According to the Minimum Standards for the state of Texas discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child

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- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may 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 on 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.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of a 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.

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- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

### **Biting Policy**

We realize that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior of children in the 18 months through 2-year-old classrooms.

General guidelines for biting are:

- Helping the bitten child feel better and provide first-aid if needed.
- Completing an incident report for parents of the children involved
- Discussing the situation with the biter's parents and the parents of the child that was bitten.

Depending upon the ages and circumstances involved additional actions might include:

- Discussing a better solution with all children involved
- Separation of involved children
- Showing/giving the biter something appropriate to bite (teething ring)
- Ensuring that the environment provides enough challenging activities.
- Carefully observing the involved child to identify precipitating events and prevent recurrences.
- Conferences with parents to discuss the child's actions at home, parental discipline techniques, search for outside resources etc.

**Children who bite 3 times in a day will be sent home.**

**Children over the age of 3 who bite may be sent home immediately.**

**Children who are repetitive biters may be permanently suspended from the center.**

**Just as with any other behavior issue regarding a child is confidential, the name of the child that has bitten is also confidential.**

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### **Suspension and Exclusion**

Behavior problems that are ongoing or extremely disruptive to the group may require a trip to the Director's office, parental intervention at the time of the behavior, early pick up, temporary suspension or disenrollment. Decisions regarding the actions to take with a child who exhibits extreme behavior issues will be made at the discretion of the Director.

### **Minimum Standards and Licensing**

Graceful Journey is licensed by the state of Texas. We have a copy of the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers available for you to view in our office. These are the minimum requirements, but we will always try to exceed these standards.

A copy of the latest state inspection report is always posted in the lobby.

### **Social Media**

We reserve the right to dismiss your child from Graceful Journey Learning Center if teachers, or the center is slandered on any social media.

If you have problems or concerns, please speak to the director. We want to be made aware so we can address the issue immediately.

### **Questions or Concerns**

At Graceful Journey Learning Center, we will always strive to provide the highest quality of care possible. We want our parents/guardians to feel comfortable in bringing to our attention any lack in service, questions concerning our policies, or suggestions for improvements within our center.

Please speak to the director. Teachers cannot properly lead their class and have a conference at the same time.

### **Employees**

All employees have had a Criminal History Check and an FBI fingerprint, are certified in First Aid and CPR, have received training in how to recognize and report Child Abuse and Neglect (also, community organizations that have training programs available to childcare center staff, children, and parents), training in sudden infant death syndrome and Early Childhood Brain Development. If a staff member has not worked in a licensed childcare facility for at least 2 years previously, they must complete a 24-hour pre-service training before they work with the children. Then they receive extensive on-the-job training before being responsible for a class on their own.

Additionally, each caregiver must keep up 24 hours of training per year of employment. These hours are obtained through workshops, seminars, staff meetings, etc.

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It is a minimum standard of the State of Texas that all caregivers receive at least one clock hour of training in child abuse and neglect.

This includes:

- Factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse.
- Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect.
- Internal procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect
- Community organizations that have training programs available to childcare center staff members, children, and parents.

### **Employee Immunization**

According to the local health department there are no immunizations required for staff that work in childcare. Therefore, Graceful Journey does not require our staff to be vaccinated to work in our center.

### **Screen Time**

We cannot use screen time activities for a child under the age of two years. For children two years or older, screen time is limited.

### **Cameras**

Graceful Journey will use a camera system to monitor classrooms, teachers, children, and all areas inside and outside of the center. This is for office use only.

We do not use the system for parents to watch their children.

### **Procedures for Conducting Health Checks**

If the need arises, our center will conduct health checks before allowing the children to be dropped off. This can include temperature checks, head checks for lice, etc.

### **Sexual Abuse**

We do not condone any type of abuse including sexual abuse. In the event this occurred, the staff would be immediately terminated. Parents would be notified immediately, and we would notify local authorities and the DFPS Hotline.

### **How to Contact:**

Local Child Care Licensing Office

Phone: 409-730-2424 Fax: 512-276-3094

2105 Executive Blvd.  
Beaumont, Texas 77705

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Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-252-5400

Website: <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

Poison Control Hotline

1-800-222-1222 available 24 hours a day

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

Graceful Journey Learning Center requires all parents/guardians, visitors of enrolled children to always behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect.

**Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on our property, thereafter, and that parent's child may be subject to disenrollment.**

### **Swearing/Cursing**

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language. And at no time shall inappropriate language be directed towards members of our staff. This will not be tolerated.

### **Smoking/Vaping**

In accordance with the Minimum standards, smoking or vaping is strictly prohibited on the property inside or outside the building.

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### **Graceful Journey Parent Agreement Form**

#### **Operation Policies**

I have read and understand the operational policies given to me at the time of enrollment. I agree to abide by the rules and policies. I understand the Owner/Director of the center has the right to adjust the rates/fees and make necessary policy changes in the Operational Policies. Parents will be notified when changes are made.

#### **Meals**

I understand that Graceful Journey Learning Center will provide Breakfast from 8-9 am and afternoon snack from 2:30-3:30 pm. I understand parents/guardians will be responsible to send lunch in a lunch kit with an icepack and thermos or drink every day.

#### **Photo Permission**

Graceful Journey Learning Center will take photos of your child for classroom projects. Photos may be used for our private social media page. If you do not want your child's photo taken, please indicate below.

#### **Tuition/Fees**

All parents/guardians are required to sign an automatic payment form when your child is enrolled. Weekly fees will always be drafted the Friday before the week you will use the center. You will be notified ahead of time when other fees will be automatically drafted.

Your weekly fee must be paid whether your child attends or not. This holds their spot.

No vacation or illness credit will be given.

#### **Absenteeism**

Please notify Graceful Journey if your child will be absent. This helps us plan the day.

Remember your child must be dropped off by 9:00 am every day.



**Parent/Guardians signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date signed:** \_\_\_\_\_