



# **Parent Handbook September 2022**

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# Welcome to MAYS!

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Mays School (MAYS) provides an exceptional learning environment where children feel safe and respected. We support and encourage the relationship between students, families, and staff. Our priority is to provide nurturing care and high-quality education for infant, toddler, preschool, and kindergarten children.

## PHILOSOPHY

MAYS is a Reggio Emilia inspired preschool, providing an inquiry-based learning program for young children. We believe that children learn through meaningful interactions, inquiring about new ideas, and exposure to new opportunities. High-quality early education and care are crucial for a child's later success in school and life, and we are committed to providing the best experiences, education, and nurturing care to children enrolled in our program.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

MAYS is a year-round private preschool for children six weeks of age through six years of age. We provide an exceptional learning environment where children are able to learn, grow, and play together. Children at MAYS feel safe and respected because we view our students as capable and competent individuals with a world of potential ahead of them.

One of the most unique aspects of MAYS is that parents also benefit from participating. While children are loved, cherished, challenged, and encouraged, their parents find a community of support, ideas, and unconditional respect. MAYS is truly an amazing school experience for both the child and parent. We feel that families share an equal role in their child's education while at MAYS.

## THE MAYS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Our curriculum provides a playful and purposeful learning plan based on children's interests and inquiries. Indoor and outdoor time provide a variety of learning opportunities throughout the day. Learning goals are focused on helping children build positive self-esteem, develop creativity, and build the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills necessary for future success.

In order for children to be well prepared for school, they need to develop an understanding of basic concepts and facts (knowledge), as well as develop skills necessary for physical growth, reading, math, science, social studies, and other areas of learning. MAYS's learning plan includes hands-on interest areas, as well as individual, small, and large group learning by qualified teachers.

We strive to adapt our curriculum to meet the needs of our students and the ever-changing world. We teach our students how to learn and love learning, not simply memorize. At MAYS, we believe in a blended technique of teaching young children about the world around them. We feel that children will go further than ever imagined if simply given a chance.

## LESSON PLANS

Daily lesson plans are written on each student's daily report. Lesson plans describe the special activities planned and include the daily learning objectives. We use our lesson plans as a guide for learning, but also build in the opportunities for students to explore their own curiosity. Students and teachers are encouraged to expand on the monthly lesson plans and follow the child's creative interests. Monthly lesson plans are posted in each classroom and copies are available for parents.

# The Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia Approach values the child as strong, capable and resilient; rich with wonder and knowledge. Every child brings with them deep curiosity and potential and this innate curiosity drives their interest to understand their world and their place within it. Reggio Emilia schools are based on the highly successful preschools developed by the townspeople of Reggio Emilia, Italy during the 1940s. Classrooms can be comprised of same-age or multi-age children groups—a sense of community is the most important aspect of the classroom, as classmates will stay together for years.

Students take the lead in learning—the curriculum consists of projects that reflect the interests of the students. Teachers observe the spontaneous curiosity of their students, and then guide them to create projects that reflect their pursuits. Children are expected to learn through mistakes rather than correction, as parents, students, and adults are considered equal learners and able to choose their learning paths. Their play and projects are documented in photographs and records of their own words, which allows teachers and parents to follow each student's progress and helps children see their actions as meaningful. Reggio Emilia schools emphasize creativity and artistic representation.

Children in a Reggio Emilia program are seen as naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. It is an approach that values the human spirit and the development of the whole child—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. Reggio Emilia learning environments are aesthetically pleasing and meticulously arranged to help children embrace the joy of learning.

Teachers and the learning environment play similar, critical roles in a Reggio Emilia program. Teachers are the guides, scribes, and advocates that foster an inviting, interesting, community-based learning environment. The environment is viewed as the “third teacher,” in addition to the parent and the caregiver, and is thoughtfully arranged to foster creative exploration while encouraging interaction and communication. The classrooms display project work, both completed and in-progress, to tell the story of those that share the space.

You will not find worksheets, workbooks, or textbooks in our classrooms; we learn through natural exploration and hands-on play. Reggio Emilia uses a project-based approach to expand on learning and reach the ten learning domains (reading, writing, language, speech, gross motor, fine motor, math, science, social and emotional, and art) each month. Teachers introduce materials, concepts, and mediums that allow children to express their ideas and interests.

For instance, if the monthly discovery topic is zoo animals and a student becomes interested in zebras, we will create a lesson involving zebras to help the child expand their knowledge and interest in the animal. For math, we could use blocks to create a zebra's black and white pattern or count the stripes in a toy zebra. To tie in reading and language we would fill the reading area with books about zebras and learn new vocabulary such as savannah, adaptations, and camouflage. For science, we would talk about the environment that the zebra lives in, and research what zebras eat. During fine motor and art exploration we could use ink to draw on white paper, write in our journals about zebras, and paint a picture of a zebra. The student's interest can tie into every learning area to help them retain the information and enjoy learning each day!

# School Calendar 2022-2023

## HOURS OF OPERATION

We are open from 6:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Please see the school calendar for dates that MAYS will be closed for teacher training, holidays, and other events.

### August 2022

**12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> – Closed for teacher training**

17<sup>th</sup> – Meet the Teacher: Parents-only event (4PM to 7PM)

18<sup>th</sup> – Fall transitions

### September 2022

3<sup>rd</sup> – MAYS Playdate at Colonial Park

**5<sup>th</sup> – Closed for Labor Day**

12<sup>th</sup> – Enrichment/extracurricular classes begin (38 classes total)

26<sup>th</sup> – Scholastic Book Fair begins

### October 2022

1<sup>st</sup> – MAYS Playdate at the school

7<sup>th</sup> – Fall Mud Day!

31<sup>st</sup> – Classroom costume parties (bring a lunch!)

### November 2022

12<sup>th</sup> – MAYS Playdate at the Houston Zoo

15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> – Picture days (individual and sibling)

22<sup>nd</sup> – Teddy Bear Picnic (bring a teddy bear and lunch!)

21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> – No enrichment/extracurricular classes

**23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> – Closed for Thanksgiving break**

### December 2022

1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> – Teacher Gift Fund

2<sup>nd</sup> – Progress reports sent home

10<sup>th</sup> – Parent-Teacher Conference appointments (Saturday)

19<sup>st</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> – No enrichment/extracurricular classes

21<sup>st</sup> – Pajama Party (wear your favorite pajamas and bring a lunch!)

21<sup>st</sup> – Children's supply refresh (send all items home)

**22<sup>nd</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> – Closed for winter break**

### January 2023

**2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> – Closed for winter break and teacher training**

16<sup>th</sup> – Enrichment/extracurricular classes begin

23<sup>rd</sup> – Lunar New Year celebrations

### February 2023

1<sup>st</sup> – Celebration of diversity and Black History Month

13<sup>th</sup> – Barefoot Books Book Fair begins

14<sup>th</sup> – Friendship Day Book Exchange

25<sup>th</sup> – MAYS Playdate at Froberg's Farm

### March 2023

8<sup>th</sup> – Holi Celebrations (bring a lunch!)

**13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> – Closed for spring break**

25<sup>th</sup> – Snow Cone Social at Evergreen Park (10:30AM to 12PM)

### April 2023

**7<sup>th</sup> – Closed for Good Friday and teacher training**

10<sup>th</sup> – Spring Party and Easter Egg Hunt (bring a lunch!)

21<sup>st</sup> – Spring Mud Day!

22<sup>nd</sup> – MAYS Playdate at the Houston Arboretum

28<sup>th</sup> – Grandparent's Storytime at MAYS

### May 2023

1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> – Teacher Appreciation Week

19<sup>th</sup> – Picture Day (group and graduation)

20<sup>th</sup> – MAYS Playdate at the Nature Discovery Center

**29<sup>th</sup> – Closed for Memorial Day**

### June 2023

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> – No enrichment/extracurricular classes

1<sup>st</sup> – Progress reports sent home

2<sup>nd</sup> – Super Sports Day (wear your sports gear!)

12<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> – Parent-Teacher Conference appointments

30<sup>th</sup> – Summer Party and Picnic (bring a lunch!)

### July 2023

**3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> – Closed for summer break**

16<sup>th</sup> – Popsicles at the Pool (10AM to 12PM)

31<sup>st</sup> – Enrichment/extracurricular classes end

## DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule gives a general timeline of events of the day. The schedule may be adjusted to meet the needs of the students and is often changed to accommodate long-term learning projects. Each day students have opportunities for gross motor, fine motor, sensory, reading, language, math, science, social, emotional, and music development. Each classroom has an example of a typical day's schedule posted on the classroom wall. The daily schedule alternates between teacher and student directed activities and has enough flexibility to accommodate changing needs of the students and unexpected events.

## ABSENTEEISM

There are no requirements regarding attendance, but please notify us before 9:00 AM the day your child is going to be absent. You may mark your child absent on the communication app and the notification will be sent directly to the front office and your child's teacher. You are welcome to drop off your child in their classroom anytime between 6:30 AM to 9:30 AM, or 2:30 PM to 5:00 PM. Dropping off during lunch, nap time, or prime learning times causes a disruption to the classroom. It is important that your arrival and departure each day are as consistent as possible in order to create a routine for your child. This will also help prepare them for elementary school and beyond.

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

A parent must supervise and is responsible for their child any time that the parent is on campus or attending an off-campus school-sponsored event or class. Do not leave your child unattended for any amount of time for any reason. A parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up person must sign each child in and out of his or her classroom each day using the electronic keypad located next to the front office. This ensures that the child is safely released to their parent or authorized pick-up person and that the teacher knows the number of children in his/her care at any given moment. Parents are responsible for helping their child put away their belongings and adjusting to the classroom environment each morning.

## TOURS AND VISITORS

We encourage all families to tour MAYS before enrolling. Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the center director and are allowed in the school only at the discretion of the Director. Visitors must provide MAYS with a current state ID to be considered for a tour of the facility. An employee of MAYS will accompany visitors at all times while touring the facility. Parents of currently enrolled students are welcome to visit the school or their child at any time during our normal hours of operation.

## CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

At MAYS, we feel that it is extremely important for us to help train and support the next generation of educators. Students, teachers, pediatric residents, and researchers all spend time at MAYS. Observers are never left alone with children and are always supervised by MAYS personnel. Before observers take photos or videos of the students, parents must sign a release waiver.

## TEACHER-TO-CHILD RATIOS

Our low teacher-to-child ratios allow teachers to focus on the individual learning styles and needs of each student in our program. We are dedicated to creating a safe, caring, and stimulating environment for children. Ratios are based on the total enrollment in the classroom, not minute-by-minute attendance.

### Teacher-to-Child Ratios

- 3 – 12 months of age: 1 teacher to 3 children
- 13 – 18 months of age: 1 teacher to 4 children
- 19 – 35 months of age: 1 teacher to 5 children
- 36 – 72 months of age: 1 teacher to 9 children

## MEMBERSHIPS

MAYS is a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC), the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA), the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC), and Texas Rising Star (TRS).

All of these programs, along with Texas Rising Star, ensure that childcare and preschool programs not only meet all of our state standards, but go above and beyond to ensure quality care and education for young children. We exceed Texas state minimum standards.

## ANIMALS

Animals occasionally visit the school to assist teachers in exploring units of study. If an animal is visiting the school, a notice will be posted in advance of the visit. We currently have school pets including, but not limited to: guinea pigs, fancy rats, rabbits, hamsters, mice, gerbils, lizards, hedgehogs, sphynx cats, frogs, turtles, tortoises, and a fish aquarium.

# Tuition and Fees

Tuition includes breakfast, lunch, three snacks, classroom supplies, wet wipes, sunscreen, bug spray, over-the-counter medications (restrictions apply), napping equipment, special events, family events, and enrichment classes. Tuition is not refunded or decreased due to illness, vacation, absences, emergency closures, pandemics, or any other reason. We continue to pay our teachers their full pay rate even when your child is not in attendance. All tuition, fees, and costs are subject to change.

## 2022-2023 School Year

### Infant Community (0-11 months by September 1st)

\$1600/month 6:30 AM – 3:30 PM

\$1850/month 6:30 AM – 5:00 PM

### Preschool Community (3 years by September 1st)

\$1300/month 6:30 AM – 3:30 PM

\$1550/month 6:30 AM – 5:00 PM

### Toddler Community (1 year by September 1st)

\$1600/month 6:30 AM – 3:30 PM

\$1850/month 6:30 AM – 5:00 PM

### Kinder Community (4/5 years by September 1st)

\$1200/month 6:30 AM – 3:30 PM

\$1450/month 6:30 AM – 5:00 PM

### Early Preschool Community (2 years by September 1st)

\$1400/month 6:30 AM – 3:30 PM

\$1650/month 6:30 AM – 5:00 PM

### Fees

Waiting List Fee: \$20

New Student Registration: \$300

Annual Supply Fee: \$200 (due May 1<sup>st</sup>)

## TUITION PAYMENTS

We accept check, credit card, and ACH (bank) draft payments for tuition. \$30 will be charged to your account for returned payments. A 3% convenience fee is applied to your account for each credit/debit card transaction. We do not charge for any other payment type. We accept childcare subsidies based on availability and need; please visit <https://www.wrksolutions.com/for-individuals/financial-aid/financial-aid-for-child-care> to apply. We are also available to help with this process as needed.

## DISCOUNTS

We offer a 10% sibling tuition discount for the oldest child currently enrolled at MAYS. We also offer a 10% discount to educators working within a public or private preschool, elementary school, middle school, or high school. In addition, we offer a 5% discount for paying a full school year's tuition in advance, from September to August (tuition paid in advance is not refundable for any reason, including withdrawal from the school).

## WITHDRAWAL

In the instance that you need to withdraw your child for any reason, a written notice is required at least six weeks prior to your child's withdrawal. Parents remain responsible for six weeks of tuition after a child's departure if proper written notice is not given. If you wish to re-enroll your child, please contact the office. You will be placed on our waiting list and contacted when a new space is available. A \$500 fee is required for reinstatement of enrollment.

## ENROLLMENT FEES

The waiting list fee is due when the waiting list application is submitted. The registration fee is due when the student is offered a space at MAYS. Both fees are one-time and non-refundable.

## LATE PICK-UP FEE

If you anticipate arriving late, please contact the office. For each child, parents are charged \$1 for each minute after pick-up time (3:30 PM or 5:00 PM). If a parent is more than one hour late, a fee of \$200 will be charged, regardless of the number of siblings. We charge late fees based on the clock located in the office. Please feel free to adjust your clock to match ours. If a parent is more than 30 minutes late picking up their child three or more times during the school year, then they will be unenrolled from MAYS regardless of the reason.

## LONG-TERM ABSENCES AND VACATIONS

If your family is going on an extended vacation (12+ consecutive weeks), then you may hold your child's enrollment at MAYS by paying 50% of your normal tuition for the time period your child is absent. A written notice is required at least eight (8) weeks prior to your child's vacation period for consideration of reduced payment.

## TUITION PAYMENT DEADLINES

Tuition is due on the first business day of each month. A daily late fee of \$20 will be charged to your account on the third through the fifth day of the month. If payment is not received by the sixth day of the month, your child's enrollment will be cancelled. If payment is received late more than once, then an ACH draft is required to be set up for all future payments—at this point, check and credit card payments will no longer be accepted.

## ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child at MAYS by filling out a waiting list application and submitting the \$20 application fee to the front office after their first tour of the school. Waiting list applications will be reviewed and processed within 10 business days. A representative from MAYS will call or email with information about the next available guaranteed openings. At that time, parents must pay the non-refundable registration fee to hold the space for their child. We accept waiting list applications year-round. We traditionally accept new children into the classroom each September. Before a child can attend our program, we must have current, accurate, and up to date immunization records, the completed enrollment form, the signed health statement, the registration fee, and tuition for the first month paid. If the student is transferring from another school, we require a letter of recommendation from the child's current teacher and/or director, a copy of their most recent progress report, and any special education referral letters. All required vaccinations must be current at the time of admission and must be kept current throughout the child's enrollment.

## CLASSROOM AND YEARLY TRANSITIONS

Transition plans vary according to the student's individual needs. Teachers inform the parents of the differences in the new learning environment and discuss the upcoming changes for the growing child. Napping and feeding schedules continue to be flexible for children 18 months and younger. Classroom assignments are based on the student's age.

## STARTING SCHOOL

Helping children and parents transition and feel comfortable at MAYS is very important to us. During the first week of school, to help ease the process, parents are encouraged to stay a while with their child in the classroom and help their child settle into the new environment and routine. During this time, teachers will ask parents questions to better understand your child before a full separation occurs. For most students, this separation is the first big transition in their lives, so we want to make it as smooth as possible.

## MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT

MAYS hosts a Meet the Teacher night before the start of each school year. We encourage all parents to attend this event and take some time to get to know your child's classroom teachers. We are also available during this time to review this parent handbook with all new and returning families.

To help with the initial transition to school, we encourage parents to:

- Show your child around the school and classroom
- Introduce your child to the teachers and staff members
- Explore the classroom materials with your child
- Bring family pictures to share with the class
- Bring a stuffed animal for your child to hold
- Bring all of your child's supplies labeled and ready to use
- Pick up before noon during the first week of school
- Allow additional time during pick-up to spend with your child in the classroom

MAYS discourages parents from sneaking out of the classroom, as this can prolong and intensify separation anxiety. We encourage parents and teachers to work together to create a daily "goodbye" routine. You may want to help your child settle into the classroom by reading them a book or doing a quick activity before you give them a hug or kiss and say goodbye. We want to instill a daily routine in order to give them confidence that you trust their teacher and will be back soon. This helps children prepare for your departure and have a good start to their day. The classroom teacher will comfort the child and will assist in morning activities. Feel free to call and check on your child after drop-off; we understand that starting preschool can be more stressful for the parents than the students.

We believe strongly in active children in our classrooms, so we purposefully purchase passive toys to promote engagement and imaginative play. Our classrooms do not have any screens or battery-operated toys for the children's use. Please do not bring any screens into our classrooms.

## **THE MAYS SCHOOL STAFF**

Our teachers are passionate about providing nurturing care and exciting learning experiences for each student in their classrooms. They understand that providing students with safe and developmentally appropriate learning and play environments is the key to future school success for children. Our teachers are highly trained in early childhood education and most have several years of experience working with young children. All staff members are thoroughly screened with a criminal background check and an FBI fingerprint check before employment and every two years thereafter. We discourage any parent from forming or encouraging outside relationships with any current or former employee of MAYS.

### Education & Training

Our teaching staff have several years of teaching experience, master's or bachelor's degrees in education, a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA), or are in the process of receiving one. We understand that well-trained teachers are the cornerstone of a high-quality program for children. Our teaching staff receive 48 hours of annual training in topics including:

- 1 hour in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect
- 1 hour in SIDS, shaken baby, and safe sleep practices
- 6 hours in cultural diversity, fostering self-esteem, and enrichment classes
- 10 hours in CPR, first aid, safety, child health, and nutrition
- 10 hours in child development and early brain development
- 10 hours in guidance, discipline, and teacher-child interaction
- 10 hours in curriculum (the Reggio Emilia Approach and the Montessori Method)

## PARENT MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

When parent meetings or conferences are scheduled, attendance is expected by at least one parent. Conferences may be scheduled with the Director and/or teacher to discuss the child's developmental progress, questions, concerns, and policy changes. The parents or the teacher may initiate a conference at any time during the year. If a conference or meeting is scheduled after school hours, please arrange for a babysitter. Parent-teacher conferences typically take place two to three times each year. We encourage parents to give us feedback throughout the school year, and we also email annual parent surveys to all enrolled families each February.

## PROGRESS REPORTS/DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

Teachers and MAYS administration will send home progress reports and/or developmental screenings two to four times per year, depending on the child's age and development. We use a mixture of knowledge-based assessments and *Ages and Stages Developmental Screening* tools to evaluate and track your child's progress.

## PARENT CONTACT

Parents are contacted by email and text if early dismissal is necessary due to inclement weather or an emergency. If a child is injured, the parent will receive an incident report to sign that describes the nature of the injury, when it occurred, and how it happened. Parents are contacted immediately if an injury requires emergency attention.

### Special Instructions

If you have special instructions for the teachers or the Director, please put the request in writing and ensure the teacher or Director receives it. The best way to ensure your instructions are received is to enter them in the school communication app. Paper notes are easily misplaced with small children.

## ITEMS FROM HOME

Please do not send toys, jewelry, or valuables from home with your child, as they often are difficult to share or may get lost or broken. We provide toys, equipment, and activities specifically designed to engage your child in learning and play activities during the day. If a teacher requests a special item be brought in for curricular purposes, then the parent must give the item directly to the classroom teacher. Toys, books, items that show violence or weapons are strictly prohibited. We are not responsible for any lost, stolen, or broken items brought from home.

## OUTDOOR PLAY

We strongly believe that outdoor play is crucial to a child's development, cognitively, emotionally, socially, and physically. At MAYS, in addition to our rigorous indoor activities, we spend about three hours each day outdoors, rain, shine, or snow! We will shorten outdoor play to 20-30 minutes if the temperature is over 95 degrees Fahrenheit or under 40 degrees Fahrenheit. We will shorten outdoor play to 10-15 minutes if the temperature is over 100 degrees Fahrenheit or under 32 degrees Fahrenheit. During days with extreme weather, we will provide additional indoor gross motor games and activities to ensure each child receives an adequate amount of physical activity in their day. We believe that some risk-taking is expected while exploring the outdoors and play equipment. We expect our children to climb, jump, run, hop, and most likely fall down a few times while on the playground. We provide water to all children at all times.

### Rain

In Houston, we experience rain very often and our children love to explore the water, fill buckets, and splash in puddles. We often enjoy rainy-day play time. Please bring rain boots or water shoes and a rain jacket to keep in the classroom. We do not go outside if lightning has been spotted in the last 30 minutes or if it is raining too hard to clearly monitor the children.

## SPLASH DAYS

During the warmer months, our playground sprinklers are used for Splash Days for children of all ages. Splash Day is a fun-filled activity with sprinkler play, water table exploration, and fun summer-themed activities! On your child's designated Splash Day, please bring a towel, swimsuit, swim diapers, dry clothes, and water shoes. Splash day takes place during each child's normal morning playground time. If your child is too sick to participate, then they are too sick to come to school.

## STUDENT DRESS CODE

All students are required to have three or more extra sets of clothing each day. For your convenience, you may leave these clothes in your child's cubby. Children participate in a variety of activities during the day including painting, drawing, sensory play, gardening, outdoor play, cutting, and gluing. Not all of the products we use for projects is washable. Children should be dressed in clothing that can be soiled or damaged without causing great concern.

Do not send your child to school in overalls or clothes with difficult closures. Clothing should be easy to manage when using the bathroom and during diaper changes. **All clothing items must be clearly labeled with your child's first name and last initial.** MAYS is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items brought to school.

### Shoes

Sneakers or soft-soled shoes with enclosed toes are required for preventing injuries. Your child must wear appropriate shoes every day. This will allow your child to safely participate in physical activities. Crocs, open-toed sandals, flip-flops, loose-fitting shoes, plastic shoes, and backless shoes are not allowed. We require all children to have three pairs of shoes each day (indoor shoes, outdoor shoes, and water shoes or rainboots).

### Weather-Appropriate Attire

You are required to bring rain boots and a rain jacket for your child to wear outside when it is wet and/or raining. Rain attire is welcome to be left in your child's cubby for the entire year. Students should also bring a sweater or jacket each day, even if it does not feel cold in the morning, as the temperature may drop in the evening or the classroom could become cool. Students should bring a sun hat to wear while playing outside in the summer and a winter hat for playing outside in the cold. Coats, jackets, sweaters, and hats may be left in your child's cubby for the entire year. While we encourage students to wear their jackets in the winter, hats in the summer, and rain boots when it's wet, we believe that children over the age of two are capable of self-regulation and are not forced to wear these items. The teachers will bring the weather-appropriate items outside with the student and help the student put them on.

### Jewelry & Accessories

Students are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. Jewelry is a safety hazard for your child and the other students enrolled in the school. Hairbands, clips, and other small accessories are also a hazard in a classroom. If the child or another child in the classroom can remove an item, then please do not send your child to school with it. If a staff member sees a potential hazard, they will remove the accessory and place it in your child's backpack.

### Logos

Students should not wear clothing with offensive logos or symbols. Shirts with other schools' logos on them should also not be worn to school.

### Field Trips

Children attending field trips must wear a MAYS polo shirt and navy blue or khaki shorts, pants, or skirts. Due to state licensing requirements, the MAYS logo must be visible at all times while students are off-campus. The logo should not be occluded by a hoodie or jacket unless that item is also MAYS-branded. MAYS-branded clothing is available to order in the front office.

## LABEL, LABEL, LABEL!

It is very important that your child's first name and last initial is clearly labeled on their shoes, socks, clothing, sheets, snacks, backpack, and everything else brought from home. We suggest purchasing labels from namebubbles.com. It is required by Texas Childcare Licensing that all personal items are clearly labeled. If an item is sent to school without a label on it, the teachers will write on it with a permanent marker. Due to state licensing requirements, we cannot be lenient with this policy.

- 1) Clothing must be labeled with your child's first name and last initial, or you can bring a bag to keep in the classroom with all of your child's clothing in it. The bag/bags must be reusable and sealable.
- 2) Bottles, sippy cups, water bottles, food, shoes, backpacks, jackets, rain boots, diaper cream, lotion, wipes, pacifiers, blankets, and other items must be labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

## SUPPLIES

Please take home extra clothing or bedding that needs washing and return a new set the next day. Check your child's cubby for artwork, homework, notes, progress reports, incident reports, and other memos daily.

## INCIDENTS

Parents are required to sign any incident or illness reports at pick-up time. The teacher will be able to briefly discuss the incident with you at pick-up. However, if you feel an in-depth discussion is needed, then please schedule a meeting, conference, or phone call for later in the day or week.

## EMERGENCY CLOSURE PROCEDURES

During inclement weather and other emergencies, MAYS will inform all parents about the situation and may temporarily close the school to ensure the safety of students and staff. Emergency closings are posted on our website, Facebook page, and parents receive emails and text alerts. Parents are expected to pick up their children within one hour of the notification. Staff will stay with the children until the Director releases them.

## EVACUATION AND RELOCATION PROCEDURES

If evacuation of the MAYS campus is deemed necessary, we will relocate to the McDonald's Restaurant located adjacent to the school. In the event that the McDonald's is not safe, we will post relocation information on our Facebook page, our website, and send text/email alerts to parents, if possible. We will attempt to call parents or emergency contacts to update them on where we are located. Children will be grouped according to age and staff will stay with the children until the Director releases them.

## RELEASE OF CHILDREN

MAYS releases children only to individuals authorized by you. Authorized individuals must be identified on your enrollment form and agreed upon by both parents prior to enrollment. Upon arrival, the authorized person must allow MAYS to copy their photo ID for the child's file. The child will not be released without a photo ID from the person approved for pick-up. If your child is to be released to any other person, you must authorize that person in writing prior to any such release.

Please notify the office in writing immediately if an authorized individual is to be removed from your child's enrollment forms or if you need to add a new authorized person. You can email, call, or text us with any updates. You can also update your information on the communication app if a staff member is not available to help. If an unauthorized person should attempt to pick up your child, we will notify you immediately and the child will not be released.

## SECURITY PROCEDURES

To ensure the security of the students in our care, the door to the corridor leading to the classrooms is a controlled-access door and is locked at all times. We ask that all parents ensure that the door is fully closed after entering the secured area to prevent unauthorized people from gaining access. Please do not hold open the door for others. The playground is surrounded by privacy fencing and is only accessible by entering the building. Security cameras are located in the classrooms, in the hallways, in the reception area, on the playground, and in the parking lot. Security cameras are used for security and internal monitoring of the classrooms and are not accessible by parents. MAYS has a monitored fire alarm system and panic buttons/silent alarms are installed in various hidden locations around the school. Emergency exit doors to the outside are present in all classrooms. All children and staff practice fire, severe weather, and other emergency drills each month.

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

At MAYS, confidential or sensitive information will only be shared on a “need to know” basis with our employees and advisory board members in order for them to safely and appropriately care for your child and plan activities. Confidential or sensitive information about other children, other parents, teachers, or employees will not be shared with parents. MAYS strives to protect everyone’s rights. Parents do not have the right to share any confidential information that they may observe in the classroom with anyone besides the center Director.

## ILLNESS POLICY

**We do not provide sick-child care.** If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified to come and pick up your child immediately. If we are unable to reach you, we will call your emergency contacts. Your child will be isolated from other students until you or one of your emergency contacts arrives. Please make arrangements to be able to pick up your child within 90 minutes of a “sick child” phone call. We will call if your child has a temperature higher than 100.00 degrees Fahrenheit, an unidentified rash, ringworm, lice, strep throat, thick nasal discharge, persistent or “barking” cough, vomiting, diarrhea, or if your child is ill enough to require one-on-one care.

## RETURN AFTER ILLNESS

A child may return to school when his or her temperature is normal and they are free from contagions, including diarrhea and vomiting, for 48 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication or 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication if they have a doctor’s note stating that they are not contagious. In some situations, a doctor’s note may be required regardless of a quarantine period, including unidentified rashes, ringworm, or lice. If your child is too sick to go outdoors and participate in water activities, your child must remain at home. According to Texas Childcare Licensing, if the weather permits, children are required to go outdoors twice per day. Please see our guide to common childhood illnesses for more details.

## HEALTH CHECKS

Each morning, our teachers look for signs of illness in each child and also note any rashes, scratches, or bruises, as required by Texas Childcare Licensing.

## HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Every year, parents are required to submit a hearing and vision screening for their child if they are four years of age before September 1<sup>st</sup>. This form is due on or before January 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year. We will submit this form to the local health department for review.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

When a child in our care has been medically diagnosed with a communicable disease, we will notify the appropriate health authorities and follow their recommendations for providing information to parents of all exposed children. We will notify parents of exposed children within 24 hours by posting information in the child's classroom or by sending an email with information about the communicable disease to parents. We ask that all parents notify us when their child has been diagnosed with any illness that requires them to remain home from school.

### Immunizations

Parents are required to maintain up-to-date immunization (shot) records for their child while enrolled at MAYS. If a student's immunization record is out of date, a MAYS employee will contact you for an updated record. Parents who fail to maintain proper immunization records will be unenrolled from MAYS.

## MEDICINE

The following procedures are required regarding the application of ointments or medications, with the exception of diaper creams:

- A parent must sign in the medicine every day or leave permission for "as needed" use.
- All medications and creams must be in the original container with the child's full name and the date that the medication was dropped off at the school.
- The medication label dosages will be followed unless a doctor's note states otherwise.
- All medication is kept in the front office—do not leave any medication or ointments in your child's backpack, diaper bag, or classroom, including lip balm and hand sanitizer.

## MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a medical emergency, we will contact the child's parents. If we cannot contact the parents, we will call those persons listed as emergency contacts. If the emergency requires immediate medical attention, emergency medical services will be called to transport the child to the hospital.

If an employee believes that a child is undergoing an anaphylactic reaction, then a MAYS staff member will administer an epinephrine auto-injector (Epipen). If the family has not provided the needed emergency medication, then MAYS will administer an auto-injector prescribed in the name of The Mays School.

Emergency medications are administered under implied consent from the parent or guardian that provided it. If time allows, we will contact the parents or guardians before administering emergency medication. MAYS teachers are provided annual training to handle and administer emergency medications.

## SUNSCREEN, INSECT REPELLANT, AND CREAMS

MAYS provides sunscreen, insect repellent, lotion, rash cream, and healing ointment for students six months and older to use during the day. MAYS staff members will help children apply these products on an "as needed" basis. All of our products are Honest Company, Babyganics, Burt's Bees, California Baby, ThinkSport, ThinkBaby, Coppertone Pure & Simple, Supergoop, or Seventh Generation brand products. Please see the front office for full ingredient lists. Parents may opt out of the use of any or all of these products by sending an email to [info@mays.school](mailto:info@mays.school). Parents are welcome to bring alternative products for their child to use. Before we administer any of these items, parents must fill out and sign the form located in the front office.

## PROVIDED MEDICATIONS

MAYS provides infant Tylenol (Acetaminophen), infant Advil (Ibuprofen), children's Tylenol (Acetaminophen), children's Advil (Ibuprofen), children's Zyrtec (Cetirizine HCl), children's Benadryl (Diphenhydramine), antibiotic ointment (Neosporin), children's allergy medication (Loratadine), and anti-itch cream (Hydrocortisone). Before we administer any school-provided medication, parents must fill out and sign the medication form located in the front office. Please note that administering medication does not allow a sick child to remain at school. It is only offered as a convenience to parents.

## WET WIPES

MAYS provides wet wipes for the students to use during diaper changes, in the classroom, and on the playground. All of our products are Honest Company, Babyganics, Mamabear, HelloBello, Amazon Elements, Huggies Natural Care, Pampers Pure, Water Wipes, or Seventh Generation brand products. You may opt out of the use of these products by sending an email to [info@mays.school](mailto:info@mays.school).

## HAND WASHING PROCEDURES

Staff are required to wash their own hands, as well as the hands of a child upon arrival for the day, before and after meals and snacks, after outdoor play, after using the bathroom, when a child's hands are soiled, when assisting with toileting, diapering, or after coming into contact with bodily fluids, including those from wiping noses or coughing.

## CLEANLINESS POLICY

We take the well-being of every child very seriously and work hard to provide a clean and sanitary environment. Toys are disinfected after use and all play areas are sanitized throughout the day. Each evening, the facility is cleaned and sanitized by a professional cleaning crew. We only use non-toxic, natural cleaning products and soaps in the school, with an exception made in times of an illness breakout or pandemic, when we may need to use stronger products to ensure proper sanitation.

## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Birthdays are wonderful celebrations at MAYS! We encourage parents to plan a small party to take place in the classroom on or near the child's birthday. This is a great time for parents to get to know the teachers and classmates. Parties may take place between 2:30 PM and 3:00 PM in the classroom or on the playground. In the past, parents have provided a special snack, created a special art project with the students, or read a story to the students. Other ideas include making "goodie bags," creating a simple cooking project, or donating a special book to the child's classroom in honor of the birthday. We are open to new ideas, but please check with the front office before booking anything. Parents are encouraged to pick up their child following the party.

All food or drinks brought for parties or celebrations must be pre-approved by all parents with a child in the classroom and the MAYS administration. MAYS does not allow treats with icing. We suggest a fruit tray with a fun dip option, rice crispy treats, muffins, cheese and crackers, cookies, fruit popsicles, applesauce, or yogurt cups. If you choose to bring a special snack, please bring an individual organic milk or 100% organic fruit juice for each child to enjoy with the snack. We are also not allowed to have balloons in our classrooms. All party food from home must be store purchased.

If you would like to have a special party for your child's class, please let the front office know, in writing, at least one week in advance. If you would like to have a party outside of school, all children in the classroom must be invited to the party—please do not exclude any classmates. If you would like to send a digital invitation, please email a PDF of the invitation and a cover letter to [info@mays.school](mailto:info@mays.school) six weeks before the party. We will only email it one time.

## CLASSROOM PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

We love to party at MAYS! Each year we try to celebrate lots of holidays and events from around the world. Before each party or celebration, we will post a sign and send an email with information about the special event and what food will be served. Parents will have an opportunity to sign up to bring food, drinks, decorations, and volunteer during the party. Please let us know if you would like to plan a classroom celebration for an event that you and your family celebrates.

We encourage families to become involved in their child education and care by joining the classroom to read books, share family recipes and culture, expand on the class's current interests, and join us for playdates and school events!

## LIBRARY

The MAYS library is located between the Mulberry and Spruce classrooms, with books appropriate for all age ranges. Classrooms visit the library for scheduled and non-scheduled activities, based on their current lesson plan and interest topics. Parents are free to visit the library at any time and check out books by filling out the book log in the library or stopping by the front office. All parents and students must exit the building through the front office; the exit doors in the library area are for emergencies only.

## INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ART STUDIOS

The MAYS indoor art studio is located across from the library area, and the outdoor art studio is located in the back walkway, near the Willow, Birch, and Magnolia classrooms. Classrooms visit the art studios for planned activities based on their current lesson plan and interest topics. MAYS art studios provide opportunities for students to develop their creative expression through explorations of a variety of mediums, tools, and materials. While all classrooms have schedules that include art exploration, the MAYS curriculum is student-led, and the day-to-day activities may be different based on students' interests.

## ART CLASSES

We offer process-based and therapeutic art lessons for infants through age eight. The classes are taught one-on-one or in small groups, depending on the child's needs and development. We do not teach structured art lessons, but rather the love and appreciation for art, fine motor skills, sensory development, and movement. Please see the front office for more information and pricing.

# Meals and Nutrition

We provide full, nutritious meals that children enjoy, and a second helping is always available. We give children the opportunity to establish healthy eating habits as well as an understanding of the relationship between food, health, and growth. Students that are enrolled in our full-time program, are over 18 months of age, and are able to eat solid table food will be provided breakfast, lunch, and three snacks throughout the day. Children that are enrolled in our part-time program will be provided breakfast, lunch, and two snacks. Each child will automatically start school food at 18 months of age, unless written notice is emailed to [info@mays.school](mailto:info@mays.school). All food we serve is listed on the menu and posted on our bulletin board. Any changes to the menu will be posted. Our kitchen facilities are inspected regularly by local health officials. All catered food and/or food for special events is also prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials. Milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables are available to all children enrolled in our program each day.

Please send an email to [info@mays.school](mailto:info@mays.school) if you feel that your child is ready for school-provided table food before 18 months of age. The child must have at least six teeth, be able to chew solid table food, and be at least 12 months of age. The child must be ready to eat everything on the menu before they start school food. We do not provide food that is cut smaller than one inch. Liquids and food hotter than 110°F are kept out of reach of children.

Food is allowed from home if it meets MAYS and the state's nutritional requirements and is pre-approved by the Director. Please do not send your child to school with candy, artificially sweetened drinks, or food containing peanuts or tree nuts. If any of these items are sent to school, they will be thrown away. If you bring food from home that requires refrigeration or other temperature control, please inform your classroom's teachers.

We do not give food, candy, or treats as rewards for good behavior. We do not reward a child for eating everything on his or her plate. We encourage children to taste new foods, but we never force a child to taste or eat food. We serve all organic milk, fresh or frozen organic fruits and vegetables, all-natural or organic meats, Greek yogurt, whole grain or wheat bread, and organic pasta. Parents are responsible for labeling and placing food and drinks brought from home in the classroom refrigerator. You must label every item in your child's lunch bag; simply labeling the bag is not sufficient. We do not heat food or drinks brought from home after the child is 18 months of age. The exception to this rule is for breastmilk. Our snacks are approved by the Texas Department of Agriculture. We meet annually with pediatricians and/or nutritionists to ensure that our menu provides proper nutrition for our students.

## FOOD ALLERGIES

If your child has a food allergy, please let us know immediately. Parents are required to complete a food allergy plan with their child's doctor and turn it in to the front office before the child begins care. Parents are required to supply emergency medication such as an EpiPen for their child. Emergency medication must be in the original container and must not be expired or damaged. We are a peanut- and tree nut-free school. All staff are educated on food allergies and take precautions to ensure children are protected.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide alternative foods for children with allergies. The food must be as similar as possible to the food that we serve. For example, if we are serving a grain, the food brought from home must be a grain. If we are serving a vegetable, the food brought from home must be a vegetable. We are not able to guarantee the specific brands of food that will be served each day, as we occasionally must use multiple brands to accommodate all of the children.

## FOOD INTOLERANCES

If your child has a food intolerance, please let us know immediately. Parents are required to turn in a signed note from their child's pediatrician with detailed instructions on foods that should be avoided and possible side effects before their child begins care. It is the parent's responsibility to provide alternative foods for children with intolerances.

## FOOD PREFERENCES

We do not allow menu changes for food preferences. If your child does not like an item on the menu, you are welcome to bring a substitution from home, but the child will still be served each menu item. We provide menu accommodations for students who are vegetarian. For a parent who chooses to provide a child's food and snacks from home, please understand that we are not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting your child's daily food needs.

For more information on healthy eating, please visit:

[https://squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/cacfp/New%20Meal%20Pattern/CACFP%20new%20meal%20pattern%20best\\_practices.pdf](https://squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/cacfp/New%20Meal%20Pattern/CACFP%20new%20meal%20pattern%20best_practices.pdf)

## ESSENTIAL OILS AND GARDENS

MAYS has a large variety of plants on-site that the students have access to. We fully encourage our students to help plant, water, care for, and explore the plants on our property. We use Young Living, Now, and Eden's Garden brands of essential oils in our classrooms to provide a cleaner environment for our students. It is important for you to let us know if your child has any allergies so that we can take the proper precautions in the classroom and around the school.

## SENSORY PLAY

Our students' days are filled with a mixture of structured and unstructured play, both indoors and outdoors. Our students participate in sensory exploration every day, exploring edible and non-edible materials. Sensory exploration takes place in the classroom, on the playground, and in the outdoor sensory center. We maintain proper teacher-to-child ratios during all sensory activities, indoor or outdoor. If you ever have a question about any material your child is experiencing, please see the front office for a full ingredient list.

# Infant/Toddler Community

We provide a nurturing and safe learning environment for students three to 18 months of age that is designed to encourage infants' cognitive, emotional, and physical development. Infants are taken outside twice per day as weather permits. Babies love to go for a ride in our strollers and crawl or walk on the playground's cushioned turf! Infants are all very unique and have their own patterns for play, feeding, and sleeping. We use an infant's unique patterns as our guide to introduce daily activities that help prepare the infant for life. The infant curriculum includes math, science, sensory, art, fine motor, gross motor, tummy time, and social awareness activities.

## WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR INFANT

- A backpack
- Diapers
- Diaper cream
- Six bottles or three sippy cups
- One cup for water
- Two pacifiers (if needed)
- Two sleep sacks (swaddles are not allowed—the child's arms must be free to move)
- Formula and/or breast milk (enough to satisfy the child's hunger cues)
- Baby food/snacks
- Three to five extra sets of clothes
- A sweater or jacket (to keep in the classroom)
- A sun hat or winter hat (to keep in the classroom)
- Two pairs of shoes (for walking infants)
- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- Rain jacket and rain boots for rainy day play (to keep in the classroom)
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- Art smock (optional)

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

## BREASTFEEDING AND BREAST MILK, BOTTLES, SIPPY CUPS, AND BABY FOOD

An area with an adult-sized rocking chair is located in the infant classroom and is available for breastfeeding mothers. Upon request, a private room is also available. Breast milk can remain in the freezer located in the infant classroom for up to one week. Please bring home any leftover milk each Friday evening. We are not responsible for any lost or spoiled milk due to loss of power or unforeseeable disasters. We follow the following safety rules when preparing and storing breastmilk: warmed, frozen, or refrigerated milk is good for 60 minutes, fresh milk (never cooled) is good for six hours, refrigerated milk is good for six days, and frozen milk is good for six months. We use a slow cooker to warm all bottles and baby food brought from home. We do not use a microwave. We cannot reuse breastmilk or formula past one hour following warming. Upon request, MAYS will provide breastfeeding resources, education, and support to nursing mothers. We do not refill or sanitize bottles, sippy cups, or food containers. Empty bottles, sippy cups, and food containers are rinsed and put back into the child's bag for washing and sanitizing at home. Formula, baby food, and snacks can remain in the student's cubby. Parents should check the student's cubby each evening to see if more supplies are necessary. Food which needs to be pureed must be pureed at home and brought to school ready to eat, including bananas and avocados. All infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified. We are not allowed to serve any FDA-exempt infant formulas.

## SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES

Infants (children from birth to 12 months of age) nap at different times throughout the day. Some infants take several "cat naps" during the day, while others take long naps two or more times per day. We allow babies to sleep whenever they are sleepy. Bumper pads, blankets, pillows, sleep positioning devices, or stuffed animals are not allowed in the cribs. Please bring a sleep sack or warm pajamas for your infant to sleep in. Swaddles or clothes with restraints are not permitted. Infants must be placed on their backs to sleep until they are capable of rolling from tummy to back and from back to tummy without assistance. Infants may use a pacifier to sleep, but it must not have a stuffed animal attached. Infants may not sleep in a swing or bouncy chair. If they fall asleep in a swing or bouncy chair, we will move them to a crib. MAYS will provide all sheets for the cribs to ensure they are tight-fitting and clean. According to Texas Childcare Licensing, any exceptions must be accompanied by a note from a physician.

# Early Preschool Community

Our early preschool classrooms are designed for students 18 months to three years of age, and encourage exploration, promote language development, foster self-help skills, build motor skills, and improve coordination and cognitive processing. Our program offers students a variety of fun, stimulating learning activities each day.

Early preschool is a wonderful time when children first start verbalizing their inquiries and communicating their needs. We build our curriculum around their interests and needs and encourage their curiosity to grow each day. Music and movement, story time, and creative art activities help children develop social, fine-motor, and early literacy skills. Our various toys, learning materials, and equipment are arranged to promote active exploration in different interest areas.

One of our early preschoolers' favorite activities is to get messy and explore with their whole bodies. Sensory development is a key component for little growing bodies—it helps with emotional regulation, fine and gross motor skills, coordination, problem solving, sorting, and also builds nerve connections that allow for complex thinking skills. Our early preschoolers participate in one to two hours of sensory play per day. They explore sand, water, beans, rice, paper, ice, cereal, paint, clay, play-dough, and so much more! Please make sure your early preschooler is dressed and ready for a messy day everyday.

## WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR EARLY PRESCHOOLER

- Diapers/pull-ups (if needed)
- Diaper cream
- A backpack (must be able to fit a 9x12 folder)
- A water bottle (washed at home each night)
- A sippy cup or training cup for milk
- A nap roll (washed at home each week)
- Three extra sets of clothes (to keep in the classroom)
- A sweater or jacket (to keep in the classroom)
- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat or winter hat (to keep in the classroom)
- Two pairs of shoes (indoor and outdoor; the indoor pair will stay in the classroom)
- Rain jacket and rain boots for rainy day play (to keep in the classroom)
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- Art smock (optional)

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

## TOILET TRAINING

There is no perfect age to start toilet training, but most children are ready between 24 and 36 months of age. At MAYS, we want toilet training to be a collaboration between the parent, teacher, and child. The first step to successfully toilet training your child is to relax and look for the signs of readiness. Your child must show most of the signs of readiness before toilet training will be successful at school and at home. MAYS can provide additional information on toilet training once your child is 24 months of age.

## NAPTIME PROCEDURES

Naptime for early preschoolers is 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM daily. Students are expected to rest quietly during naptime. After 45 minutes, children who do not sleep will be given quiet activities for the remainder of naptime. We help the students learn self-soothing techniques by introducing a sleep routine in the classroom and helping students feel safe and comfortable in the classroom.

# Preschool Community

Our preschool community is designed for children three to four years of age with their future success in mind. The classroom environment is designed to engage preschoolers' creative processing, problem solving, art, science, math and reasoning skills, as well as to promote language development. As we implement methods from the Reggio Emilia Approach, we are steadfast in the belief that each child should be exposed to a variety of real-world sights, sounds, and experiences. Our classrooms are designed to provoke interest and curiosity in all learning areas.

When a child shows a particular interest in an area of study, we encourage and assist them to learn more. By asking "Why is a giraffe's neck so long?" a child and teacher can organically expound on the subject, which can lead to all kinds of exploration. Our curriculum will adapt to the needs of the student and classroom. Kindergarten readiness is emphasized by integrating state learning standards throughout ongoing educational experiences.

## WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR PRESCHOOLER

- A backpack (must be able to fit a 9x12 folder)
- Three extra sets of clothes (to keep in the classroom)
- A water bottle (washed at home each night)
- A sweater or jacket (to keep in the classroom)
- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat or winter hat (to keep in the classroom)
- A nap roll (washed at home each week)
- A rain jacket and rain boots for rainy day play (to keep in the classroom)
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- Art smock (optional)

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

## NAPTIME PROCEDURES

Naptime for preschoolers (three-four years of age) is from 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM daily. Students are expected to rest quietly during naptime. After 45 minutes, children who do not sleep will be given quiet activities for the remainder of naptime.

# Pre-K & Kindergarten Communities

Our pre-kindergarten and kindergarten communities are designed for children four to six years of age with their future school success in mind. The classroom environment, facilitated by a 1:9 teacher-to-child ratio with fully degreed teachers, is designed to engage the child's creative processing, problem solving, art, writing, science, math, and reasoning skills, as well as to promote language and reading development. As we implement methods from the Reggio Emilia Approach, we are steadfast in the belief that each child should be exposed to a variety of real-world sights, sounds, and experiences.

## WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR PRE-K or KINDERGARTENER

- A backpack (must be able to fit a 9x12 folder)
- One extra set of clothes
- A water bottle (washed at home each night)
- A sweater or jacket (to keep in the classroom)
- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat or winter hat (to keep in the classroom)
- A rain jacket and rain boots for rainy day play (to keep in the classroom)
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- Art smock (optional)

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

## CURRICULUM

Our curriculum will meet and exceed all HISD standards and expectations. We are blending the Reggio Emilia Approach with a standardized curriculum to provide a well-rounded year for our kinder-aged students. Children graduating from kindergarten at MAYS are expected to enroll in first grade at another campus for the 2022-2023 school year.

### **Language/Science/Math/Social Studies**

Creative Curriculum and project-based learning.

### **Writing/Reading**

Handwriting Without Tears Preschool, Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Level.

Scholastic Reading using sight words and easy readers (levels A-F).

## SCHOOL DAY

Our school day is from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Students arriving before 9:00 AM or staying after 3:30 PM will be served meals and participate in learning center and sensory exploration activities. We will take attendance each day at 9:15 AM. It is important that your child attends each day.

## KINDERGARTEN READINESS

At MAYS, we strive to prepare every student for future school success. During October of the year before entering Kindergarten, we will schedule a parent conference to discuss the public and private school options in our area and develop a step-by-step plan of action for Kindergarten enrollment. MAYS also offers a Pre-K Bridge program for students who have summer birthdays and decide to remain in preschool for one additional year. We teach our Bridge students on a Kindergarten level and instill in them the confidence and skills to start public or private elementary school the next fall. Please let us know by May 1st if your currently enrolled child is planning on attending our Bridge program.

# Extracurricular Classes & Field Trips

MAYS offers extracurricular activities, field trips, and off-campus events for our students three to six years of age. We know that evening time is very valuable for families with young children. We want to help take some of that evening stress away from you by providing transportation and supervision for your children to fun, exciting and educational activities. Extracurricular classes are subject to change. Please see the front office for a complete list of extracurricular classes and pamphlets for tuition information.



## Wolfies Swim School

Wolfies' number one priority is to teach children to be safe in and around the water, and they tailor every lesson to each student's needs and goals. Students will have a 30-minute semi-private lesson each week. Swim classes will take place at Wolfies Swim School in Bellaire. Under most situations, make up classes are not allowed.



## Dance Stars by Stretch-n-Grow

When children are inspired by their imagination to move, Dance Stars instructors know how to match their high energy and enthusiasm through dance. With Dance Stars, boys and girls learn the fundamentals of ballet and jazz while developing grace, coordination, balance and poise. By inspiring a passion for dance, our imaginative and engaging classes will create twirling, self expressive machines!



## Field Trips

Parents are notified of the date, time, and destination. Written parental permission is required for child participation. We also encourage parents and grandparents to attend the classroom field trips as volunteers. Field trips are for age-specific groups only; unfortunately, siblings not enrolled in this group will not be able to attend. Please stop by the front office if you would like to sign up to be a volunteer. Volunteers will be required to wear a MAYS-branded shirt.



## Transportation

We transport children three years of age and older on scheduled field trips, to events, and to extracurricular classes. All children transported in MAYS vehicles are securely buckled into proper fitting booster seats or car seats. **Safety is our number one priority at all times.** If a child is unable to safely be transported and supervised during an off-campus event, class, or field trip, they will immediately return to the school or a parent will be asked to attend the trip with them to ensure their safety.

# Enrichment Classes!

MAYS provides wonderful enrichment classes for all of our children three to six years of age every day of the week. Our enrichment classes focus on growing and developing the “whole child” by encouraging music appreciation, hand-eye coordination, fine arts, and the development of language skills.



**Yoga Stars:** Yoga Stars is a fun and engaging way to strengthen growing muscles, aid in digestion, promote better sleeping patterns, and help children towards their next stage of physical and mental development. Classes focus on teaching young children the basics of Yoga and Yoga positions through stories and play. Children will learn breathing, chanting, and relaxation in the class, which focuses on strength and flexibility in a positive environment. This class also incorporates fun dance-based activities to encourage aerobic activity.



**Stretch-n-Grow:** Stretch-n-Grow classes provide fun fitness, motor-skill development, and brain training sessions. Classes concentrate on large-muscle groups, motor skills, coordination, balance, resistance, flexibility and aerobic activity. Classes also provide general discussions on exercise, health, nutrition, safety, and hygiene, as well as instruction on the names of muscles and bones throughout the year.



**Music Together:** Music Together is an internationally-recognized music program for children from birth through age seven. At the core of the Music Together approach is the idea that young children learn best from the powerful role models of parents/caregivers who are actively making music. The program brings families together by providing a rich musical environment in the classroom and then facilitating family participation in spontaneous musical activity at home in daily life, which is important to music development and early childhood learning. Our students will participate in weekly classes that teach basic music concepts like rhythm, beat, tone, pitch and instrumental skills, all while having fun!



**Arts Alive!:** For twenty years, Arts Alive! has been providing a research-based, creative integrated arts curriculum. The result is an innovative suite of classes and workshops specifically designed to acknowledge and enhance each child’s learning style in order to develop critical skills for all aspects of learning and personal development. By incorporating activities from all the expressive arts (drama, dance, music, and visual arts) Arts Alive! Delivers classes and curriculum that acknowledge, validate, and enhance each child's individual learning style and potential.



**Language Kids World Spanish Class:** Language Kids World provides immersion language acquisition programs for children. MAYS is thrilled to invite Language Kids World into the school, as early second language study enhances children’s understanding of how language itself works. It also promotes achievement in English vocabulary and reading skills. Studies show children who learn a second language are more creative, better at solving complex problems, and show greater cognitive flexibility. Children who are exposed to face to-face instruction in a second language at a young age demonstrate a greater ability to properly pronounce words and speak without an accent.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

A child's development and age are considered in our discipline and guidance plans for each age group. We use several methods of discipline and guidance with young children. We use the redirection method to guide behaviors and focus on telling the child what they CAN do. We focus on allowing children to make choices and have control over their environment. We help the children focus on making good choices in the classroom. If a child is making poor choices, we may remove privileges, remove the child from the situation, or let the child have a few minutes of "calm down time." We create a positive and supportive classroom environment where children feel listened to and encouraged to talk to a teacher if they need help resolving a conflict. We give children an understandable set of guidelines to help them develop internal control and encourage acceptable behavior.

We **do not** allow the use of a harsh or abusive tone of voice, threats or derogatory remarks, physical punishments including hitting, spanking, shaking, grabbing, humiliating, neglecting, or scaring, placing a child in a dark room, withholding active play, forcing a child to remain inactive or in a restraining device (such as a high chair or stroller) for an inappropriately long period of time for the child's age, or withholding or threatening to withhold food. These methods of discipline are completely unacceptable.

## STUDENT BEHAVIOR

MAYS strives to support and guide all children through the journey of learning how to manage their own behaviors, emotions, and to resolve conflicts that arise. Students attending MAYS are learning new skills and setting goals every day, and social and emotional development is a huge part of that journey. If a child's behavior is disrupting the class or causing emotional or physical harm to others, the Director will observe the child and recommend a plan of action for the teacher. If the child does not respond to the guidance plan, a meeting with the parent and the Director will be arranged. The parent and Director will review the recommended plan of action for the teacher. The Director will also create a recommended plan of action for the parent that is appropriate for the behavioral situation, including any recommendations for help from a shadow, specialist, therapist, or doctor. If a child does not respond to guidance or the parents do not seek outside help and the child continues to exhibit aggressive or inappropriate behavior, his or her enrollment may be cancelled at the sole discretion of the Director.

## BITING

Biting is a very common behavior among children from birth to three years of age. Biting is a form of communication. We understand that biting is an age-appropriate activity, but we focus on preventing biting behaviors by providing caring relationships with children, a supportive environment, regular routines and schedules, anticipating and redirecting children known to bite, reminding children of the expectations for not biting, giving children something else to chew on to prevent biting, and making transitions as smooth as possible. More information about biting can be requested from the front office.

## DISMISSAL

MAYS reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time with or without cause. MAYS will notify the parents in writing and an email if the child is dismissed from the program. If MAYS dismisses a child, then a refund check will be issued for the unused tuition within 30 days. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of dismissal. Any balance remaining will be referred to our agency legal counsel for collection. A dismissed child and his/her parent must email and request an appointment with the Director if they wish to return to MAYS property for any reason.

The safety of our students and teachers is of paramount importance. If a student is exhibiting extreme behaviors that we feel place themselves, other students, or teachers at risk of injury, their parents will be called and will be expected to pick up the child within one hour. The child must remain in the care of their parents for the remainder of the day. If we call a parent to pick up for safety concerns more than three times in one month, his or her enrollment may be cancelled at the sole discretion of the Director.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We encourage parents to be engaged in their child's school experience. It truly takes a village to raise so many wonderful children! We have lots of fun activities throughout the school year that parents and students are invited to attend. Please see our school calendar for more details about upcoming events.

### Parent Volunteers

There are several ways in which you can volunteer, such as being a field trip chaperone, reading stories to the children, assisting the classroom teacher, helping with maintenance/building projects, coordinating special events, helping in the office, planting flowers in the gardens, and much more!

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. MAYS is your school, and we encourage parents to contribute to MAYS by assisting with special projects and sharing their time and talents. Parents are invited to share holidays and other cultural traditions with the children. If you are interested in cooking or baking, reading stories, or helping children write their stories, we encourage you to volunteer your time and energy. Any contributions of time, talent, energy, class snacks, new or gently used learning toys or books are always gratefully received.

Non-custodial parents, grandparents, and others are invited and encouraged to volunteer at MAYS. If you would like to become a volunteer at MAYS, please visit the front office to fill out a background check form. Custodial parents do not need an additional background check. Anyone with a criminal history is prohibited from volunteering at the school.

### Parent Communication

While our staff welcome and value the opportunity to meet and talk with parents, it is difficult for the staff to speak during arrival and dismissal times, as well as when class is in session, as they must devote their full attention to the students. Therefore, please keep conversations brief. If you need to communicate specific information, a written note or email is preferred. If you wish to talk to the teacher at length, please arrange a time to meet in person or over the phone. Please do not discuss problems or concerns in the presence of your child or other parents.

### Notification

Parents are notified of any changes to our policies via email. If a policy changes, parents will be given one month's notice before the change is mandatory. We review all policies as needed, as well as on an annual basis.

## PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

MAYS requires parents and visiting adults to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of MAYS is to provide an appropriate environment in which young children can learn, grow, and develop. Achieving this environment is not only the responsibility of the staff, but also each and every parent or adult that enters the building. Parents are required to foster this environment.

Parents or visiting adults should at no time use harsh language or profanity while on campus or during a school-sponsored event. Confrontational interactions with employees, other parents, children, or other adults associated with MAYS are strictly prohibited. If you have a disagreement or concern with anyone at MAYS, please call or email the front office to set up a time that we can try to resolve the problem in an appropriate manner. Threats of any kind will not be tolerated at MAYS. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. If a parent witnesses another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about a behavior that was reported to them by their child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher or Director. Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for a parent to seek out another parent to discuss any child's behavior.

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed to protect the children, families, and employees of MAYS. Please be particularly mindful of the entrance procedures.

MAYS takes the responsibility of maintaining confidentiality of all persons associated with the school very seriously. The confidentiality policy applies to all children, parents, employees, and visitors of MAYS. Any parent who shares information considered confidential will be considered in violation of the confidentiality policy. Do not post any personal or confidential information on social media sites, such as MAYS student or staff names, addresses, phone numbers, or pictures of staff or other children. Posting any negative or libelous statements about MAYS, MAYS staff, or MAYS students on the internet may result in disenrollment.

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at MAYS or while volunteering at any school-sponsored event. The following clothing is prohibited: see-through clothing, short-shorts, clothing with rips/tears in inappropriate places, or anything suggestive or vulgar in nature. While volunteering in classrooms with students two years of age and younger, please remove all jewelry and items that could cause a hazard.

Parents are asked to not start any social media groups or chats involving MAYS without prior school approval, as these groups tend to exclude other parents and impinge on our families' and teachers' privacy. The Mays School has a private Facebook group that parents are more than welcome to join. This group post local events, parenting resources, fun photos, and gives parents an opportunity to connect to our community.

Parents and nannies/caretakers are expected to be free from distractions (including cell phones) when picking up or dropping off children. It is important that we can share information with you and have an open line of communication.

### Custody

If you are experiencing custody difficulties, please keep us fully advised of all circumstances which may affect your child. Parents have the right to immediate access to their children. In the absence of a court order, both parents have equal rights. If your child is the subject of a court order (custody order, restraining order, or protection order) for any reason, then you must give the front office the most recent official copy at the time of enrollment and ensure that we receive every amendment thereto. All court orders will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent requests a more liberal variation of a custody order in writing, which must be signed by both parents and notarized. Restraining and protection orders will be strictly followed at all times, and only the issuing judge can amend it. Any changes to your custody arrangement or your child's home life should immediately be provided to the MAYS office in writing. If we are notified or find out at a later time that the child is the subject of a court order, then the family will be immediately unenrolled from the school. At the time of enrollment, both parents and legal guardians must be on the enrollment form. Only the guardian with primary custody will be able to change or access school records. If both parents have equal rights, then it is assumed that both parents agree on any changes to school records. Birth or adoption certificates may be required in some situations.

### Photos

We use photographs of the children in our classrooms, hallways, newsletters, flyers, website, Facebook page, and in teacher training. All MAYS families waive their right to compensation (money paid) for the use of photographs that we take.

## ADA, SPECIAL NEEDS, AND DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

MAYS serves as a safe place for children and adults with disabilities and special needs. Please let us know what we can do to help. In some cases, we may not be able to adapt the classroom environment to meet the specific special needs of a child. We do offer several solutions to families in these instances. For more information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and family resources, please visit <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us> or <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services>.

### One-on-One Care and Education Plans

MAYS can provide a shadow teacher, a one-on-one classroom environment, and an individual education plan. The tuition for this service is \$3,000 per month (up to 40 hours per week).

### Referral to a School for Children with Differences

If we are unable to provide a suitable environment for your child to safely learn and play, MAYS will research and help start the enrollment process into a school that has the training and equipment to better meet the needs of your child.

### In-School Therapy and Evaluations

PT (physical therapy), OT (occupational therapy), speech-language therapy, and behavioral therapy are all very common in early education. If we see any minor or major developmental delays, we will schedule a parent/director meeting and create a plan of action. If we refer you to a specialist, doctor, or evaluator, you are expected to follow through on our recommendation within a reasonable time period (within three months). Research shows that early intervention is key to the future success of the child. Even if the delay is minor, it is important to address it and work as a team to find the best solution for the child. Once an evaluation is complete, we can offer referrals to specialists, doctors, therapists, and other education professionals. Many of their services can be completed while your child attends school.

For bilingual or ELL students, we offer support and encouragement to students who are currently learning English. Our teachers use picture cards, visual schedules, and a translator when needed to help support the student and their family. When requested, we will try to provide a translated version of any document.

**The following information is required to be posted by all licensed childcare providers in Texas.**

TEXAS CHILDCARE LICENSING

MAYS is licensed by the State of Texas and adheres to a rigid enforcement of regulations that meet or exceed the licensed childcare standards. MAYS undergoes regular inspections by City, State, Fire, and Childcare Licensing. Parents are welcome to borrow a copy of the Texas Licensing Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers from front office staff. All inspection reports are posted on the bulletin board located in the main hallway.

TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, DRUGS, FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

The use and possession of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, E-cigarettes, and vapors of any kind are not allowed on the premises. The use or possession of illegal substances or sexually explicit materials is prohibited. Firearms are **strictly prohibited** on the premises with the exception of peace officers who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty. Hunting knives, bows and arrows, and all other weapons on **strictly prohibited** the premises. Toys, books, items that show violence, and weapons are strictly prohibited.

GANG-FREE ZONE

Gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1,000 feet of a childcare center or school is a violation and subject to penalty under Texas state law.

INSURANCE

MAYS maintains liability, auto, property workers comp, and accident insurance policies through Hibbs-Hallmark & Company. Our policy numbers are BA0000003818AF, MPA0000003817AF, BA0000003818AF, CMB0000003816AF, 46WBCAB4M6F, and PHPA019385.

UNSAFE CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

Recalls of unsafe consumer products, including children's products, are available. It is easy and free to find this information. Access the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or recall information at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services web site at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

KEEPING CHILDREN HEALTHY

Protect children from illness and disease: Wash your hands and children's hands often, immunize children, keep ill children at home, learn CPR and First Aid, make sure that children drink plenty of water, discuss special-care needs with caregivers, learn more about childhood diabetes, which impairs a body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels, and other medical conditions from your child's health-care provider.

PROTECTING CHILDREN

Shaken Baby Syndrome is the result of violently shaking young children. Injuries can include brain swelling and damage, subdural hemorrhaging, mental retardation and death. NEVER SHAKE A BABY! Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS, is the unexplained death of a sleeping baby. Always place infants to sleep on their backs on a firm surface, free from soft items such as quilts, pillows or toys.

REPORTS

You are entitled to see the following information. You may ask the director to show you the most recent copy of the Minimum Standards for this Licensed Center (also available on the web at <https://hhs.texas.gov/> or at your local Licensing office).

- The most recent Department of Family and Protective Services Inspection/Investigation Report (compliance information is also available on the web at <https://hhs.texas.gov/> or from your local Licensing office)
- Documentation of liability insurance that complies with Human Resources Code, Section 42.049
- The most recent Fire Marshal's Inspection Report
- The most recent Health Department's Sanitation Inspection Report
- The Licensed Center's operational policies

## MANDATORY REPORTING/ABUSE & NEGLECT

We contact and coordinate action with Child Protective Services if we suspect child abuse or neglect. Texas state law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report it. Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. All employees at MAYS are mandatory reporters to Child Protective Services. Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect. As mandated reporters the staff of MAYS cannot be held liable for the reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded as long as the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to: unusual marks or cuts on the child's body, severe verbal reprimands, improper clothing (size, season, or cleanliness), transporting a child without the proper child restraints (seat belt or car seat), dropping off or picking up under the influence of drugs or alcohol, not providing meals or drinks to your child or threatening to remove them, leaving your child unattended in a car, leaving your child unattended for any length of time, or sending a child to school sick or covering up symptoms with medication.

If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency. You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected. Texas Childcare Licensing (713) 940-3009, the Local Childcare Licensing office (713) 940-5200, the Child Abuse (CPS) Hotline (800) 252-5400, visit [texasabusehotline.org](http://texasabusehotline.org), or <https://hhs.texas.gov/>.

**What is Abuse and Neglect?** Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child. Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

**Warning signs of Abuse and Neglect:** Unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes; fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school; seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home; shrinks at the approach of adults; reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver; abuses animals or pets. Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses; is consistently dirty and has severe body odor; lacks sufficient clothing for the weather; parent appears to be indifferent to the child; parent seems apathetic or depressed; parent behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner; parent is abusing alcohol or other drugs.

For more information on warning signs of abuse or neglect and prevention techniques, please visit the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website](#), the [Texas Health and Human Services website](#), the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#), or visit the MAYS front office. To contact a national child abuse prevention and treatment organization, call 1-800-4-A-CHILD or visit [ChildHelp.org](http://ChildHelp.org).