
Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of our childcare outreach is to minister to the needs of the young children of Aldersgate and the community in a Christian environment conducive to education, growth, and reinforce teachings of the home through Christian values.

- Each child will learn to get along with other children and with adults.
- Each child will improve physical skills and coordination.
- Each child will learn to share toys, time and attention.
- Each child will hear and respond to music as we sing, dance, clap, play and listen.
- Each child will experiment with many art materials, using their own ideas and feelings to produce something pleasing to them.
- Each child will gain a new security and independence in the world outside their own home.
- Children will play a lot – play is their work!
- Children will learn that he or she is a child of God, a person to be valued for their own unique being and sense of dignity.

Eligibility and Admission

Our program is available to any family in the community without regard to race, sex, color, creed, religion, national origin or ancestry.

Enrollment Information

Families are welcome and encouraged to tour the classrooms and meet the teachers. We suggest a morning visit, if possible, since all classes nap in the afternoon. A child will be enrolled upon the **COMPLETION** of all required documents and registration fees. Enrollment will be on a first come, first served basis. When a vacancy occurs, the next child on the waiting list who fits the age criteria will be admitted, with priority given to:

1. Families with one child currently enrolled and wishing to enroll a second or third child.
2. Families of Aldersgate United Methodist Church.

Operation Schedule

The classrooms are operating on a school year calendar comparable to AISD, Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.

School Supplies

Check for your child's school supply list on the website, which can be found at: www.aldersgateabilene.org. These items are required on the first day of school.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Every effort is made to meet the emotional, social, intellectual and physical needs of the student on a developmental basis. We assess each child's needs during the course of the year to confirm the proper classroom placement of the child.

Our center is well trained; however, we are not specifically trained for children with special needs. We will implement a variety of measures for all children to attempt success in our center along with collaborative efforts and communication with the family. If we determine that the child needs more than we can provide, we reserve the right to withdraw the child from our facility in order for the family to find an environment better suited for that child. If the family has a diagnosis prior to enrollment, a signed waiver may be required to acknowledge we are not fully trained and will admit the student on a conditional basis.

Required Enrollment Information

The following forms are required in the office for enrollment:

- Completed enrollment form with banking information.
- Current shot records.
- If there is an allergy, an allergy action plan must be submitted with parent and doctor signature. Forms available in the office.

Uniforms

Three and Four year old classes are required to wear uniforms each day. Uniforms are available for purchase in the office.

Classroom Assignments

Class Assignment will be determined by the director after the registration process is complete. Changes may be made to your child's classroom assignment during the year as the need arises.

Software – Smartcare Services

Our center uses an online software company that provides many advantages. As soon as the family is enrolled in the software, an email is sent to the parents to set up their online account. You will be asked to download an app that will provide 2 parents/primary caregivers to use a QR code to clock in and out their children. An additional 8-digit pin number is assigned to each parent they can also use. Every contact/pick up person listed on the enrollment form **must** use a pin number. Disregard the software message that the QR code can be shared. This does not meet the state standards as it will not show who picked up the child.

Teachers input relevant information as the day progresses allowing the parent to know more about their child's day in real time. The app also allows messaging between the teacher and parents. Please remember the teacher's first priority is the care of your children and then, as time permits, they will update the app.

The family can monitor and pay on their account through the parent app. The software adds the charges and drafts the balance automatically according to the Academy requirements. Contact the office when changes are needed.

Registration, Tuition and Other Fees

Aldersgate Academy is a non-profit mission of the church. Our fees reflect operating cost.

Registration Fees

The registration fee is non-refundable. Payment of the fee guarantees a place will be held for your child in a class and partially funds the cost of learning materials used in the classrooms during the year.

Tuition Payments

- Payments will be made by bank draft. **We do not accept a cash payment.**
- ***Credit is not available for absences, family vacation or partially attended months due to illness.***
- Tuition payments are the same for all nine months, regardless of days in attendance. (Total annual school days are divided into even monthly payments).
- Tuition is drafted two weeks ahead.
- Accounts two weeks past due without previous arrangements being discussed will result in a child being dropped from the program.

ADDITIONAL FEES

- **Schedule change processing fee:** A twenty five dollar processing fee will incur when a family changes their child's day or hours of attendance during the school year. The fee will be added to the next month's tuition deduction.
- **Re-enrollment fee:** Students who are dropped due to late payments or students who stop and restart during the school year will be charged \$25.00.

Late Pick Up Fees

Our center closes promptly at 2:30pm. You may pick up your child at any time prior to 2:30pm. **After 2:30pm, the center will assess a \$1.00 per minute, per child, charge for late pick up. The fee will be added to the next draft.**

Failure To Clock Out Fee

It is important every child is clocked in because:

- It is necessary to receive software notifications from the teacher.
- State licensing requires the center to track attendance.
- In case of emergency, we want all children to show up on the attendance list.

It is important the child is clocked out because:

- State licensing requires a record of who picked up the child.
- We need to know all children left the center.
- To avoid fees. If your child is not clocked out, we will verify they did get picked up and then clock them out but a late pick up fee of \$10 will be added to the account.

Be sure the person picking up is familiar with the clock in/out process to avoid charges.

Water Bottle Fee

- It is required by state licensing that each child is offered water every day in childcare. If a water container is forgotten you will need to:
- purchase a water bottle in the coke machine for 75 cents.
- buy one from the office for \$3 (while supplies last).
- bring one back within an hour.

Early Withdrawal

In the event of early withdrawal, two weeks' notice must be given to be eligible for refund. Any tuition paid beyond when the two-week notice ends will be refunded. Registration fees are non-refundable. **No credit on tuition is given for regularly scheduled school holidays, school vacation days, family vacation or partially attended months due to illness.**

Hearing and Vision Screening

It is a state requirement that our center provides hearing and vision screening within 120 calendar days of enrollment to children who are four years of age by September 1.

Nutrition

All children eat lunch by 11:30 a.m. Parents are responsible for supplying their child's lunch. Please be aware that the center is not responsible for the lunch's nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs. State licensing does ask us to share information on nutritional value of foods, sample menus and choking hazards. We do provide a place for breastfeeding mothers to come during school hours or they may provide breastmilk for their child while in care.

Daily Procedures

All children should potty and wash their hands BEFORE entering the classrooms at Aldersgate! This is the parent's responsibility. Restrooms are located along the north hall and in the east hall. We ask parents to take care of this every morning so that there is less disruption in the classroom. An added benefit has been reduced illnesses within the center due to the extra hand washing.

Each morning, the caregiver must sign the child in on the computer/kiosk and accompany them to the classroom.

Parents, please notify the center (325-677-1045) if the child will be late, absent or on vacation. Any student missing more than two weeks without notification will be **dropped** from the program. **This is the parent's responsibility.**

Arrival Time

Classes start each day at 8:30 a.m. It is important for children to arrive on time, when children are late they often miss their favorite activities. If coming later than 10AM, a doctor's note will be required. Children need to be awake by 8 a.m. It is very difficult to sleep late, miss learning/play time and have the child still participate in naptime.

Dismissal Time

Classes end at 2:30 p.m. and remaining children will be brought to the office for pick up. A parent may authorize another person to pick up their child by:

- Listing the authorized person on the enrollment form.
- Bringing a written dated permission slip or email (on the day before the release) to the office authorizing the child's release to someone else.

No child will be released to an unauthorized person, even if the child knows the person. WRITTEN PERMISSION IS MANDATORY! *We will ask for identification.*

ALL children must arrive and depart in an approved child passenger safety seat system, as required by Texas state law. Aldersgate is required to report any child not restrained in an appropriate child safety or booster seat.

School Closings

In the event of severe weather, please watch the local television stations. We take our lead from the decisions of Abilene ISD during inclement weather and will cancel or delay opening in accordance to their determination. **In the event of any delayed start for Abilene ISD, Aldersgate Academy will open at 10:30 a.m.** If an emergency situation exists at Aldersgate UMC (for example: no heat, no water or electricity, etc.), each teacher will contact the parents of her students and inform them of the emergency

situation and impending closure. Regularly scheduled holidays are provided and noted on the school calendar. Please keep these posted at home or check the website calendar for a reminder of “No School Days” and early release days.

Schedules

The staff in each classroom will post a schedule of the daily instructional program. Your child’s environment will include age appropriate activities in:

- Circle: children sit together in a small area and interact with the teacher. At this time we discuss calendar, weather, feelings, and other interests of the children.
- Music and Movement: children are encouraged to dance and move to appropriate music. This is also a time to explore music through singing as well as playing musical instruments.
- Story: new and old stories are introduced to the child.
- Arts and Crafts: children can explore through painting, drawing, gluing, cutting and using all types of craft materials.
- Outdoor play: children can build large muscles and learn motor skills.
- Dramatic Play: children can explore creative play by role playing and interacting with other children. Office, grocery store, house, restaurant and the doctor’s office are a few of the creative ideas children use to explore.
- Science and Math: children can explore with math and science activities and experience sensory materials such as rocks, sand, water, leaves, beans, cubes, etc.
- Language development, to include vocabulary, pre-reading and pre-writing activities.
- Blocks: children can participate with building blocks and can be involved in imaginative play such as building bridges, dams, driving cars, building houses and fortresses, making everyday items such as imaginary cameras and complete cities.
- Manipulative: children can practice small motor skills through playing with age appropriate items.
- Lunch: children can thank God for the food and practice good eating habits. They are learning to manage a meal on their own as this will be expected in elementary school.

Daily schedules will vary between groups according to their developmental needs. Each schedule is designed to make the most of each day and enhance the child’s environment physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually.

Playground Policy

Licensing requires our center to offer daily opportunities for outdoor play when the weather permits. Your child will play outside every day, weather permitting. Exceptions include rain. During extremely cold or hot conditions, outside play time may be limited. Since the temperature varies greatly in West Texas, please dress your child appropriately. Layering outerwear for outdoor play is encouraged, remember to label all clothing with the child's name or initials. The playground includes an 'orbitron' which is only allowed for older children and is not to be used by anyone in our center.

Illness

The center keeps accurate emergency records for each child. These records include parent authorization of who should be called in case of a child's illness if the parent cannot be reached. It is the parent's responsibility to keep these forms current in case of any changes in address, phone number, or other relevant information.

1. If your child is sick or injured, Aldersgate Academy will:

- Assess the nature of the illness or injury.
- Call 911, or transport to the emergency room, if needed.
- Contact the authorized parent or alternate on record.
- Contact the child's physician, if necessary.
- Apply first aid as needed.
- In a non-emergency situation, if the child is not picked up within one hour of parent notification, the staff may transport the child to an emergency room (Hendrick Health System or Abilene Regional). The parents are responsible for any charges. In such cases, the parent will be notified again and directed to meet the child at the emergency room.

2. When your child is sick:

- If your child has been exposed to a contagious disease, please notify the center. The staff will be able to observe your child for any symptoms just as you do at home.
- Close communication also can help prevent the spreading of diseases to other children. We will notify you if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease while at the center. Our staff is trained to observe symptoms as well as to use prevention techniques. We will make every effort to protect the health of all our children. State licensing requires that we use the communicable disease chart as a guide to determine length of illness, readmission criteria and treatment that is necessary in order to reduce the chance of contamination to the children.

3. When to stay at home:

- A sick child belongs at home where he or she is most relaxed and comfortable.
- A child must not attend school in the following circumstances:
 1. Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. Children should be free of fever, without fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school or have a clearance signed by the doctor.
 2. Diarrhea: Children with two or more diarrhea stools in less than 4 hours will be excluded from school until the child has been free from diarrhea for 24 hours or have a signed clearance from the doctor.
 3. Vomiting within the last 24 hours.
- All children will be involved in physical fitness activities, both indoors and out, as an important part of the curriculum. Staff may not remain indoors with your child during regularly scheduled outdoor time. If you believe your child is too ill to participate, he/she may be more comfortable at home in familiar surroundings.

4. Other symptoms that indicate a child should be at home are:

- A heavy, non-clear nasal discharge.
- A constant cough or sore throat.
- Fussy, cranky and generally not him/herself.
- A skin rash, excluding diaper rash.
- Symptoms of a possible communicable disease.

5. When to return to school:

- Twenty-four (24) hours have elapsed since the last incident of diarrhea, vomiting or fever.
- An infant/toddler is determined to be suffering from teething and has no fever.
- A physician provides a written release indicating a child is free of any contagious condition.

Medication

The center will not administer any medication to your child. Medication should be given before and/or after school. Prescription medications that must be given during the school day need to be administered by the parent.

Personal Belongings / Clothing

All children should wear loose, comfortable clothing appropriate for active, involved experiences. Each child will be indoors and outdoors and involved in messy activities on

any given day. Please avoid hard to clean clothes. Understand that even the most washable red paint can stain!

Please label all jackets, bags and articles brought to school.

Children should carry at least one complete change of clothing (top and bottom, underwear, socks) in their backpack every day. Accidents happen: juice spills, water fountains erupt, paint splashes. Children are most comfortable in their own dry clothing. Parents will be contacted and asked to bring more clothes if needed. The center does not provide extra clothing. Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing.

Children should not bring toys from home to the center. All personal belongings will remain in the child's bucket/cubby while they are at Aldersgate. Please talk to the classroom teacher about a *lovey* for quiet time. Teachers have their own preferences on this issue.

After withdrawal from the Academy, personal belongings are gathered up along with portfolio items (art and pictures saved for the end of the year) and made available for pick up at the parent's convenience for up to 2 weeks. After 2 weeks, if there has not been any further communication, the items will be discarded or added to the Academy supplies for other children to use as needed.

Discipline Policy

Our responsibility is to model words and actions that a child can incorporate into his/her life skills for problem solving. Our goal is happy and secure children, confident of their ability to live peacefully and communicate well with the people around them.

Children today find themselves in an increasingly complex society that requires problem solving, self-discipline, consideration of others, respect for property and respect for themselves and others.

The rules, expectations and limits set for our children help them to find security in knowing exactly what is expected...in this way, life becomes predictable. Within these limits, the child will be encouraged to make choices and positive decisions. A child's growing self-esteem flourishes as they experience success with a variety of tasks and feel safe enough to learn from natural mistakes.

While our teachers create an age appropriate environment, they will set reasonable limits and at times redirect unacceptable behavior without humiliation or physical punishment. More importantly, the teachers will model, reinforce and nurture the positive actions we all value. Often it is possible for an alert and observant teacher to

redirect a child's behavior before a negative action occurs. Prevention is always the best policy.

As adults, our responsibility is to teach the children the positive words they can say or the actions they can take. In other words, we intervene in a situation to allow a child to vent feelings safely, to regain self-control and to give the child options for solving future problems. Usually this happens in the classroom and all children learn from the modeling of appropriate responses to conflict.

Occasionally a child will lose control to the extent that the child must be removed from the group in order for the child to regain control and to safeguard the secure feelings of the other children. Removal is not punishment. As soon as the child is quiet, the teacher plans with the child how to successfully return to the group.

This version of "time out" is a solution to a problem because it helps the child learn ways to handle their feelings and actions.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to be as involved as possible in their child's education. We welcome your presence and your comments. There will be many activities in which parents can easily participate in classroom experiences or in school wide projects. Please contact the office if you would like to participate outside of the preplanned classroom activities.

Parental Notification

As policies change, you will be notified in writing through e-mail and/or posted on our bulletin board.

Communication

- Most daily classroom communication will be through the online software app, Smartcare services.
- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to a staff member.
- Check the white board in the front entry and the white boards outside your child's classroom for notices, calendar events, monthly newsletters and more.
- Because children quickly learn to model behavior, we ask that you govern your speech and conduct with Christian values while at the church.

Electronic Communication

We communicate with parents by e-mail and our Facebook group, 'Aldersgate Academy of Abilene'. Our Facebook (FB) group is a closed group for parents/primary caregivers only. Grandparents may join on parents' approval. Most pictures of the classroom activities are posted on this FB page. If you chose to not give picture release on the enrollment form, your child will be covered up or not included in the classroom pictures. Once the child is unenrolled, your membership in the group will be cancelled.

Website Information

Academy information, registration forms, parent handbook, calendars and school supply lists are posted on the church website. The website can be found at:

www.aldersgateabilene.org

Aldersgate Academy E-mail Accounts

Director: carol@aldersgateabilene.org

Financial Director: randy@aldersgateabilene.org

Safe Environment

Texas Department of Childcare Licensing

We are a licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. You may contact our local childcare licensing office at (325) 691-8100. The Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400. The website for TDFPS is www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Annual Inspections

- Aldersgate is inspected annually by the City of Abilene Environmental Health Department, The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, child care division, and the City of Abilene Fire Department. All inspections are on file in the director's office.
- Aldersgate is equipped with approved fire alarms, a first aid kit, fire extinguishers and staff is certified in CPR and First Aid. We practice emergency fire and tornado drills regularly and an evacuation plan is posted in each classroom for everyone to see.
- A recall list is available online and we post relevant recall notices as they occur. We review and inform to ensure the recalled items are not used in our center.
- A copy of the minimum standards, the most recent licensing inspection report and requirements regarding gang free zones is available for your review in the director's office or posted on the bulletin board.

Personnel/Staff Qualifications

- Aldersgate Academy is a licensed center by the state of Texas & our direct care staff members meet all the Childcare licensing requirements.
- We hire employees that have a compassionate personality and a desire to work with children. We try to pair class team teachers that complement each other's strengths and weaknesses.
- All staff members are required to go through a criminal background check as well as a child abuse and neglect screening.
- All staff meet training requirements including preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect which includes:
 - 1) Methods for increasing awareness of issues including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect;
 - 2) Prevention techniques;
 - 3) Coordination between the center and appropriate community organizations;
 - 4) Actions that the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention.
- **Policy:** We may recommend but do not **require** our staff to obtain any of the 3 to 4 recommended adult vaccines:
 1. Influenza,
 2. Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis,
 3. Varicella
 4. Zoster (Shingles) after age 60.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

Tornado In the event that the Emergency Weather Radio broadcast system in our area advises us to take cover due to a tornado warning, the director or designated staff member will assemble the students into a centrally located hallway. All children will be counted and attendance will be checked. Parents will be notified as needed.

Fire In the event of a fire, all teachers will direct all students out of the building to the back fence by the baseball field. All staff personnel will bring a cell phone and emergency contact information for all their students. Children will be counted and attendance will be checked. Fire exit plans are located in each room of the school building.

Intruder. Doors in the center are routinely locked from the inside of the school after 8:30 am. Glass security door will be closed daily generally between 9 am and 2 pm. In the event of an intruder with or without a weapon, as much caution as humanly possible will be taken to ensure the safety of all children and staff. All parents and local authorities will be contacted by the director or designated staff member as soon as

possible. Staff are instructed to identify strangers when encountered. If a threat is perceived, staff will initiate a lockdown procedure.

Disease In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, the director or designated staff member will notify all parents and local authorities by phone or e-mail.

Evacuation In the event students and staff must relocate due to an emergency such as an explosion, toxic fumes or chemical spill, all staff will transport children by vehicle or walk to a designated safe area (McMurry University is our first plan if designated safe). Staff members will bring a cell phone and the emergency contact information for all their students before evacuating the building. Students will be counted and attendance will be taken. Parents and local authorities will be notified by phone.

Severe Injury or Illness In the event of a serious injury or illness of a child or adult, staff will assess the situation and call 911 if necessary and inform the director. Staff are first aid and CPR certified and will administer appropriate first aid until help arrives. Parent(s) will be notified as soon as possible.

Aldersgate Academy Ministries

We are led by a Ministry Team, appointed by Aldersgate Abilene. The board consists of the pastor and members of the church. A complete list of board members is posted on the wall outside the director's office.

Aldersgate Abilene

The church invites you to be a part of our community and engage in the ministries we have available. We offer a variety of activities & services on Wednesdays and Sundays. More information can be found on our website at www.aldersgateabilene.org. The website offers an interactive calendar as well as in depth explanations of other Aldersgate ministries.