

HANDBOOK FOR FAMILIES

Description of KinderFrogs School

The KinderFrogs School is an early childhood education program that addresses Texas Christian University's mission to provide research, training and service. KinderFrogs School is an early childhood education facility that was designed to accommodate young children and their families. The program predominantly serves young children with disabilities, but also includes children who do not have disabilities. Approximately 30 children and their families are served at the KinderFrogs School annually. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a summary of the policies and procedures of the KinderFrogs School. We hope that this information will be helpful to the families we serve.

KinderFrogs School Mission Statement

The mission of the KinderFrogs School is to provide an excellent, developmentally appropriate education to preschool children with Down syndrome and other developmental delays, as well as typically developing children. The KinderFrogs' faculty and staff work collaboratively with families to prepare children for successful inclusion in public and private schools.

KinderFrogs School at Texas Christian University serves as a laboratory school for the School of Education to pursue excellence in teaching and therapy.

- Texas Christian University students participate as observers, interns, and volunteers.
- Texas Christian University professors work with faculty, staff, and families to continually enhance learning and development through research.

Laboratory School

KinderFrogs School is a laboratory preschool for children with Down syndrome and other developmental delays. It is located on the Texas Christian University campus. Texas Christian University faculty, staff and students are afforded the opportunity to observe, study, research and participate in a quality educational program for young children with disabilities. Families will be informed of and give permission to any and all research involving their children.

KinderFrogs School Administration

The KinderFrogs School staff consists of:

- 1 Director
- 1 Assistant Director
- 2 Teachers
- 5 Instructional Teacher Assistants
- 4 Teacher Supported Aides
- 1 Administrative Assistant
- Part Time:
 - Physical Therapist
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Speech Therapist
 - Oral Motor Therapist
 - Music Educator
 - Adaptive Physical Educator – TCU Student

KinderFrogs Parent/Teacher Association (KTPA)

What is the KinderFrogs Parent Teacher Association and what is its mission?

- The board is made up of several representatives selected by the parents of the children at KinderFrogs School at TCU. Parents may attend the meetings or participate on the committees of choice. Positions on the board include:
 - Chair or Co-chairs
 - This position will provide overall leadership for the parent group. It will serve as ex-officio chair of the strategic planning committee.
 - Secretary/Treasurer
 - This position will keep minutes of the meetings and handle local funding transactions. It will serve as ex-officio chair of the fund-raising committee and chief liaison with the KinderFrogs Advisory Committee.
 - Toddler Room Representatives (2)
 - These representatives will serve on the social and communications committees. They will be the primary liaison with the classroom teacher.
 - Pre-K Room Representatives (2)
 - These representatives will serve on the social and communications committees. They will be the primary liaison with the classroom teacher.
 - *L.E.A.P Room Representatives(2)
 - These representatives will serve on the social and communications committees. They will be the primary liaison with the classroom teacher.

Purpose and Function of KinderFrogs Parent/Teacher Association:

- Be available for bi-monthly meetings

- Be available for calls from parents
- Lead and coordinate sub-committees in conjunction with Director
- Serve as advisors to the Director
- Assist in development of information packet for newly identified special needs parents

Standing Committees

Communications Committee will publish a newsletter, organize parent education meetings and keep minutes.

Fundraising Committee will develop and organize fundraising events.

Strategic Planning Committee will work with staff and faculty advisors to assist in evaluating and reporting the progress of the school towards its stated goals.

Social Committee will organize kick off parties, seasonal parties, donor appreciation parties, teacher appreciation, grandparent's day and end of the year parties.

Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC)

The Faculty Advisory Committee is comprised of faculty from the School of Education who provide consultation and support in the areas of:

- Curriculum development and implementation
- Accreditation issues
- Licensing issues
- Development of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP)
- Development and implementation of professional development

Licensing and Accreditation

KinderFrogs is licensed by the Child Care Division of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS). KinderFrogs adheres to the standards monitoring through TDPRS. Copies of the Minimum Standard Rules are available for parental review upon request. The most recent Licensing inspection report is posted on the Office Bulletin Boards.

Meeting the standards for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children is one of KinderFrogs School's major goals. The accreditation process includes a self-study, validation visit and commission review. KinderFrogs plans to begin this process in the Summer of 2004.

In addition, KinderFrogs utilizes the recommended practices of early intervention and early childhood special education as established by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

Admission/Review/Dismissal

Children with disabilities are considered for admission to the KinderFrogs School based upon a referral and a comprehensive evaluation. Referrals can be made by anyone with knowledge of the child, but are typically made by families. The comprehensive evaluation consists of a series of assessments that involve one or more of the following: an educator, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, and/or family members. This information is gathered either prior to the first admission of the child to KinderFrogs (usually by Early Childhood Intervention services) or during the first six weeks of enrollment. Families may be asked to pursue additional evaluations to help determine appropriate placements.

KinderFrogs School serves children ages 18 months to 6 years with Down syndrome and related developmental delays that function in the mild to moderate range of mental impairment. Admission prerequisites include, but are not limited to, sitting up without assistance and adequate muscle tone. In addition, KinderFrogs School and staff are not equipped or trained to handle medically fragile and/or medically complex children.

Decisions to determine if the child is eligible for admission to the KinderFrogs program are based on the following guidelines:

- No single procedure is used to determine a child's eligibility;
- All relevant records and evaluation information is considered in making eligibility decisions;
- Family preferences are a major factor in making decisions.

Children who do not have disabilities are admitted to the program prior to the fall semester each year. All families must complete student information and admission forms. Selections are made based on the ages of the children and the number of available slots in each classroom. The director maintains a waiting list and parents are notified as vacancies become available during the year.

The director of KinderFrogs in consultation with faculty and parents may determine that the school no longer meets the needs of a student and reserves the right to refer the child to other programs or agencies where appropriate.

KinderFrogs admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to the students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship programs, and any other school programs.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available for those who qualify. This aid provides financial assistance from 10% to 40% of the regular tuition cost based on a family's net household income and the number of persons living in the household. To apply for financial aid, a family must request the Financial Aid Form from the KinderFrogs Administrative office. The family then sends the completed form along with their income tax returns from the last two years for the household to the Director. Upon review of the information, families will be notified in writing of their eligibility for financial scholarship.

KinderFrogs School Schedule/Operating Hours

Since the KinderFrogs School is an early childhood education center that serves as a laboratory school for Texas Christian University, the yearlong schedule is closely aligned with the schedule of TCU, as well as the local school systems. The projected days of operation for each year are supplied in advance to allow parents to plan alternative childcare options. The hours of operation are from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. In order for children to maximally benefit from the educational services, parents are strongly encouraged to bring their children promptly at 8:30 a.m.

During the typical school day, each child generally follows a schedule that includes individual activities, group activities, gross motor play in the commons or outdoors, therapeutic services (if indicated), lunch, and rest (children may or may not sleep). Each child's schedule is individualized so their day includes as many learning opportunities as possible.

KinderFrogs School will offer a number of services to families that may include physical, occupational, and speech therapies using a collaborative/consultation service delivery model. The teachers and instructional teacher aides, under the supervision of the therapists, will deliver many of these services through a transdisciplinary approach in which the therapeutic activities are provided. The therapeutic activities will be integrated into the daily routine of each classroom. The therapists and teachers will monitor the activities on a regular basis. Using this approach, therapy is delivered in an efficient manner during a child's school day. Recommendations also will be provided to families for carry over in the home and other natural environments.

Based on individual children's needs, some children may be referred for supplemental direct therapies available in the community. Therapists may confer with parents to discuss recommendations and make referrals for additional therapy services.

Before School Care –Operating Hours/Policies

KinderFrogs School at TCU offers before school care for the convenience of working families. Children may be dropped off between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. to their individual classrooms. Activities are provided each morning to promote a balance of active and quiet play. The school day ends at 3:00 p.m.

Confidentiality of Student Records

A child's records are open only to the parent(s) or legal guardian, the teacher, the director, therapist, and others with a significant educational or research interest. Anyone reviewing a file must sign in and out on the Access to Student Records Form.

Supervision of Children

The KinderFrogs School is housed within the Starpoint School on the campus of Texas Christian University. There are three classrooms that serve 30 children. Children are assigned to classrooms based on their age and educational needs. The classrooms include one classroom generally serving 18 months to 2 year olds, one classroom serving 3 to 4 year olds and the third classroom serving 5 to 6 year olds.

Each classroom employs a teacher who has or is pursuing a Master's degree, and two instructional teaching assistants. Generally, the adult to child ratio is one adult for every three to four children. Children are under the supervision of a responsible adult at all times.

Delivery and Pick-up of Children

The KinderFrogs School at Texas Christian University will use the front entrance of the Starpoint School. If parents plan to stay at KinderFrogs for an extended time, they are asked to please use the Coliseum parking across the street by the Alumni Center.

Parents must sign their child in upon arrival and sign him/her out at time of departure. The sign in/out log is located at the entrance of the center.

The Authorization to Pick Up Form must be completed on the child's first day of school. If emergency changes must be made, parents should phone the school to inform the KinderFrogs staff of the change and to allow them to prepare the child for the change in plans. Because of safety and liability, children are released only to a parent or a person designated by the parent on the student information sheet. If the person is not known to the staff member, the staff member will verify the identity of the individual by asking for a valid photo identification, making a copy of the identification, and retaining the information in the child's records for six months. In addition, recording of the driver's license number and car tag number also may be required.

Positive Behavioral Support/Discipline Procedures

The staff members of KinderFrogs School provide positive behavioral support and use discipline measures that demonstrate kindness and compassion, but also firmness and consistency. Every attempt is made to help children gain the confidence and knowledge that is needed to develop their self-control. Children are not allowed to hurt themselves or others, or to destroy property.

Promoting positive behaviors in children is a primary goal in the classroom setting. Guidelines for promoting positive behaviors follow:

1. Classroom rules are simple and geared toward the childrens' developmental level.
2. Teachers and instructional teacher aides serve as models of appropriate behaviors. Speaking loudly to children and frequent use of the word "no" are not acceptable staff interactions with the children.
3. Children will be praised for following the rules and for modeling positive behaviors.
4. Children will be reminded of the rules, and classroom staff limits will be consistently enforced by the classroom staff.

Unacceptable behaviors will be addressed with using the following guidelines.

1. Consistent responses and consequences for unacceptable behavior
2. Planned ignoring
3. Restitution
4. Re-directing
5. Thinking Chair

Staff behaviors that are prohibited at KinderFrogs School include:

1. Any type of physical or aversive punishment
2. Withdrawal of food, nap, or bathroom opportunities
3. Abusive, profane or derogatory language, including speaking loudly and/or belittling
4. Any form of public or private humiliation
5. Any form of emotional abuse

Health/Safety Policy

Your child's health is of great importance. All parents will be notified if the class has been exposed to a communicable disease. You will be notified if your child becomes ill at school. The KinderFrogs School does not have a sick room or isolation room; therefore, parents must make arrangements for picking up their sick child. Parents must supply home, work, and emergency phone numbers.

Parents should notify the school when:

- Your child will not to be at school
- You will not be at your regular address or phone number to ensure that they can be reached at all times, not just in case of emergency

The family will be expected to notify the staff of any illness or circumstances indicating an absence. Exclusion from school will be based on the needs of the sick child and the other children in the classroom. In case of a communicable disease, other parents need to be notified

to watch for symptoms in their children. Children should not be sent to school if the following illnesses are present or have been present within the past twenty-four hours:

- A. The existence of a communicable disease includes the following:
 - Severe colds
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Measles, Mumps, Chicken PoxIn the case of:
 - Strep throat (must be on antibiotic for 48 hours before returning to school)
 - Pinkeye (must be on eye drops for 48 hours before returning to school).
- B. Fever greater than 100 degrees rectally
- C. Impetigo or open, draining or infected skin lesions
- D. Existence of lingering illness which would inhibit the child's participation in classroom activities or outside play

KinderFrogs School enforces the same standards in preventing employees from working while ill. In addition, KinderFrogs requires all teachers and volunteers who work with your child to have a negative TB test on file as well as a current Child Care Worker license issued by the Fort Worth Health Department. They must also sign a felony statement and receive clearance on a Criminal History Check.

Health and Safety Procedures

The following health and safety procedures are followed at KinderFrogs School:

1. Fire and tornado drills are conducted regularly at KinderFrogs School. Evacuation routes are posted in each of the classrooms.
2. All classrooms maintain a first aid kit.
3. The staff washes their hands frequently and appropriately as children are nurtured and handled.
4. Frequently mouthed/handled objects/toys are washed and sanitized between uses by children.
5. Diaper changing and toileting are performed in a separate area of the classroom. Staff always wear latex gloves when diapering or assisting children with toileting. Gloves are changed after each child. Soiled diapers and clothing are kept in separate, closed containers. Changing table paper is changed after each use.
6. All classroom materials such as towels, washcloths, bibs, sheets, and blankets are washed after single uses by the children or staff.
7. All electrical outlets in the KinderFrogs School are equipped with childproof covers.
8. All staff are certified in CPR annually.
9. All staff receives a physical and TB test annually.
10. Hepatitis B vaccinations are provided for staff.

Medical Information

Prior to admission, parents should arrange for the KinderFrogs School to receive any pertinent medical records on each child. The Child Health Assessment Form must be completed by a physician prior to admission and updated on an annual basis. This form provides the documentation of a physical examination and a record of the child's immunizations. Texas state laws requires that children enrolled in child care have received the following immunizations and boosters: DTP, OPV, HIB, MMR, and Varicella. A written statement that the child has been immunized must be on file before a child's first day of attendance. In addition, the state of Texas requires vision/hearing screening for all four year olds.

Medications

Parents must sign a medication sheet when it is absolutely necessary for a medication to be given at the school. Parents must send the medication each day with appropriate pharmacy labels attached. Nonprescription drugs must have the manufacturer's label attached, the child's name, dosage amount from the physician, and the time of dosage at school. Medications will be secured in a locked cabinet/closet out of reach of the children or in a locked refrigerator container. The teacher or an instructional teacher's aide will give medications with written permission from parents. The staff will document the date, time and dosage each time medication is administered.

Emergency Situations

ACCIDENTS AND MEDICAL

Parents must sign emergency treatment releases. The release specifies the procedures that will be followed in case of a medical emergency. These procedures include:

- Notification of parents
- Notification of individuals specified by parents if parent notification is impossible
- Notification of emergency treatment services if indicated

The KinderFrogs School is located next door to Texas Christian University's Health Center which is staffed with a physician, physician's assistant, and nurses.

INCIDENT REPORTING

An incident report is completed by the classroom teacher or by the person having knowledge of the facts when any accident, injury or significant event occurs. The report is completed within 24 hours and filed in the child's records. Parents are notified of any occurrence of an accident or injury.

SNOW/SEVERE WEATHER

In the event of snow or severe weather conditions, KinderFrogs School will follow the decision of the Fort Worth Public Schools and/or TCU. The decision to be closed or delayed will be announced on television WFAA channel 8 and NBC channel 5 at 6:00 A.M., and no separate announcement will be made for KinderFrogs. If the school opening is delayed until 10:00 A.M., KinderFrogs will follow that directive also.

EVACUATION OF FACILITIES

In the event of a gas leak, bomb threat, or other crisis that would lead to total evacuation of the building, the KinderFrogs children and personnel would relocate to the Dee J. Kelly Alumni Center. Parents would be notified of the evacuation and relocation as soon as possible.

Foods

Children should eat breakfast before they arrive in the morning. Lunch should be sent with the children each day. Snacks/juice are given mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Snacks/juice will often relate to the weekly theme.

Supplies/Personal Items

Parents are responsible for sending the following:

1. The child's personal supplies including:
 - a. an extra change of clothing
 - b. disposable diapers (if applicable)
 - c. disposable wipes
 - d. 2 boxes of Kleenex tissues
 - e. toothbrush, toothbrush cover, and toothpaste
 - f. brush and comb
 - g. a pillow and a blanket
2. The child's lunch snacks, juice or bottles each day. If needed lunches are heated in microwave ovens. The program provides plates, cups, spoons, bibs, etc
3. Monthly classroom supplies. Each month parents will receive a supply list that will include housekeeping items such as spray disinfectant, paper towels, Kleenex, etc. Snack foods may also be on the list.

All personal belongings and food items MUST be labeled with the child's name!

Dress

Please send your child in comfortable clothing and shoes each day. Daily activities include active and messy play, and the children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves

without worrying about or being restricted by their clothing. It also is requested that a change of clothes be sent to school daily or kept at school in the child's locker. Children wear oversized tee shirts during messy art activities to help protect clothing.

Field Trips

Throughout the year, field trips may be scheduled. Each child must have written consent in order to participate. All field trips are closely supervised. Parents are always welcome.

Publicity and Pictures

Visitors may visit KinderFrogs for training, research, and publicity purposes. Parents must sign a Media Consent notifying KinderFrogs whether or not your child may be photographed or videotaped for authorized publications and publicity.

Assessment

The Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS) is used to assess children, develop individual goals and objectives, develop implementation activities, evaluate progress, and guide the overall instructional planning.

In addition, Individual Family Service Plans are developed to identify family priorities, develop goals and outcome statements with associated intervention activities and evaluation plans.

Communication with Parents

The staff wants you to be aware of all KinderFrogs School events and activities throughout the school year. Additionally, we want to address any questions or concerns that you may have. To aid in this effort, we conduct Parent Orientations in the Fall and Open House in the Spring. Teachers provide daily status reports outlining your child's general mood for the day, eating and sleeping habits, and a brief summary of the activities in which your child participated. Weekly newsletters are another means of keeping you informed about KinderFrogs happenings. Family Conferences to discuss progress and set goals are conducted annually at the teacher's or parent's request.

Check the KinderFrogs website at <http://www.TeacherWeb.com/TX/TCU/KinderFrogs> to keep up to date with the latest happenings in addition to email access. Finally, we encourage you to check the bulletin board located in the lobby as well as postings outside your child's classroom to learn about the concepts and activities for the week. Teachers post weekly plans, information about class activities, daily schedules, and snacks.

In addition, KinderCam is our state-of-the-art communications system which allows parents to view still images of your child's classroom courtesy of a video camera perched high in the corner of your child's classroom. To access this system, visit www.kindercam.com, enter the

user name: “star”, and password “texans” and watch your child paint, play and work throughout the day.

For general questions about KinderFrogs School, questions about enrollment, or student records, please call the KinderFrogs Office at 817/257-6828. If you have questions or concerns about any of the policies and procedures of KinderFrogs, please contact the Director at 817/257-7181 or email her at m.tolbert@tcu.edu and she will respond in an efficient and timely manner.

Collaborative Partnerships with Families

Parents are always welcome visitors at KinderFrogs School. Parents are encouraged to observe at the KinderFrogs School as well as to communicate with teachers on a regular basis. . Parents will be notified in writing of significant or special events at school. Parents are encouraged to send notes to school concerning special events at home. Parents can leave messages on the teacher’s voice mail, which will be reviewed after 3:00 p.m. each day. Calls will be returned after the school day ends at 3:00. In an emergency, please use the main number and a message will be relayed to the classroom. The best time to talk with the teachers is during their planning period from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. E-mail is another effective way to communicate when necessary.

UCC Collaborative Partnership

KinderFrogs School has a rich partnership with the Weekday School of University Christian Church. Students from the Pre-K class of KinderFrogs are included one day a week, for a limited part of the morning, at Weekday School. A teacher assistant accompanies the students from KinderFrogs to facilitate their inclusion in the classroom. Students are transitioned into the Weekday School when deemed appropriate by the staff and student’s family.

Volunteer Policy

Our volunteer program is a thriving and vital resource for supporting our staff, program, and children. We consider volunteers to be full stakeholders in our efforts. The contribution that volunteers make in literally hundreds of ways greatly enhances and expands the overall quality and scope of our programs. Volunteers, who are regularly or frequently present at KinderFrogs must:

- Grant permission for a Criminal Background Check
- Have a current record of a tuberculosis examination, showing they are free of contagious TB
- Attend a Volunteer Orientation

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed, including information pertaining to staff, visitors, other volunteers, and most of all, our students.

Keeping Children Safe

You are entitled to see the following information:

- Minimum Standards for this Child Care Facility
- The most recent Department of Protective and Regulatory Service Inspection/Investigation Report

You may ask the office to show you the most recent copies of these items or they are available on the web at www.tdprs.state.tx.us.

Texas law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or law enforcement. Call **1-800-252-5400** to make confidential reports. You may also report abuse via the web at www.tdprs.state.tx.us. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.

See the TDPRS brochure, “Keeping Children Safe” posted on the lobby bulletin board for additional information and suggested ways to keep children healthy.

Miscellaneous

- If parents want to celebrate their child’s birthday at school, the teachers should be notified a week in advance, so they can plan accordingly. Parents will be responsible for cake, ice cream, and party decorations or party favors. Please remember that the cake and ice cream must be store bought. No homemade items can be served. Please no gift giving.
- Personal toys should not be brought to school unless it is a designated “share” day. Toys from home tend to get lost and cause problems between the children.
- If a child has a specific blanket, pillow, etc. that is absolutely required for nap/rest, parents should let teachers know, so that one can be kept at school. Children are not required to sleep, but must rest for a time on their mats.
- If a child is going to be absent, parents should call the Administrative Assistant and leave a message.
- Please use the stadium parking lot if inside the building for an extended length of time.
- Change in address, telephone number, employment, emergency numbers, or family situation, should be provided promptly to the child’s teacher or KinderFrogs Administrative Assistant.

How Can You Be Involved In KinderFrogs?

- Communicate with your child’s teacher and other staff. Help us to know you and your child better.
- Participate in the KinderFrogs Parent Teacher Association and/or on one of the Standing Committees.
- Donate time and expertise.

- Donate materials to the classroom – recycled household items, games, toys, books, etc.
- Participate in fundraisers and other center activities that will benefit your child.
- Participate in KinderFrogs activities and events.

The staff members of The KinderFrogs School hope that families find the information contained in this handbook to be helpful. Everyone is encouraged to ask questions and seek additional information as needed. The program is designed to meet the needs of each child and family.