

DISCIPLINE

Fortress YDC adheres to the following discipline philosophy:

“We believe discipline is about constructively guiding young people to learn through developing an awareness of their power and responsibility to make healthy, discerning choices.”

It is the policy of Fortress YDC that under no circumstances will physical punishment be administered to students.

Limits and rules are established for the benefit of each student. We believe enjoyable activities reduce discipline problems. Any intervention on the part of staff members will be done in a loving and positive manner, and will serve to redirect inappropriate behavior and prevent problems.

Building Blocks Early Learning Center: Should the behavior of your child interfere with his/her learning or that of the class, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The teacher will make every effort to handle minor discipline problems in a positive, constructive manner.
2. If the teacher is unsuccessful in redirecting undesired behavior, she will notify the Program Director.
3. In the event that a child's behavior continues to be a problem and no solution can be found, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child at the end of the current month.
4. In the event that the administration deems the child's behavior to be a serious threat to the safety of other students, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child immediately.

Other Programs: Using a color-coded behavior management system, the YDC staff makes every effort to handle minor discipline problems in a positive, constructive manner. In the event that teachers and Program Director deem the student's behavior to warrant suspension, they parent will be notified immediately. If necessary, a parent will be called to a conference to discuss possible solutions for continuing problems.

**Fortress Youth Development Center maintains
zero tolerance
for fighting, other types of violence
and profane or obscene gestures or language.**

FORTRESS



*...igniting powerful change
in the lives of urban youth*

Fortress Youth Development Center 2011-2012 Parent Handbook

MISSION

Fortress Youth Development Center exists to provide opportunities for inner-city children and youth to experience powerful life change in order to become productive Christian adults.

In keeping with the mission of Fortress YDC and as an outreach to those with children and youth living in the near southeast Fort Worth area, Fortress Youth Development Center aims to provide caring, loving, quality programs. Its students will be offered a fun learning environment where they will not only engage in academics but will also learn about God's word and His plan for their lives.

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A Message from the Staff....

Dear Parents:

As parents, you are the primary teachers of your children! Fortress Youth Development Center recognizes that fact and wants to be a resource for you as you seek opportunities for your children. Our programs - **Building Blocks Early Learning Center, Fortress Literacy Center (FLC), and Fortress Summer JAM** - are services offered to families who live in the Near Southeast neighborhoods of Fort Worth. It is our goal to help prepare young children for formal education and to enrich the academic lives of school-age students by providing them with a loving, caring, safe environment in which to learn.

All children are unique and special; the staff of Fortress Youth Development Center strives to bring out the individuality of each child in our programs. We recognize that children whose basic emotional, social, spiritual and physical needs are met and nurtured will be ready and eager to learn. Our curriculum is developed so that every child can experience success.

The purpose of this handbook is to detail the philosophy, programs, and general administrative policies of Fortress Youth Development Center programs. Please read it carefully, and call if you have any questions.

Thank you for entrusting your child's very special years to us. We are looking forward to a wonderful year. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please contact Terri Henson, Program Director, at 817.335.1007.

"Education is not received, it is achieved." -unknown

ILLNESS AND INJURY

Your child's health is of major importance to us. We ask that you not send your child to Fortress if he/she does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in all activities. **WE DO NOT ADMINISTER MEDICATION EXCEPT IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.** Please do not send medicine in your child's lunch box to be taken with a meal. We ask that you keep your child at home if any of the following conditions exist:

1. Wound (or sore) drainage
2. Abnormal rash, itching or swelling
3. Fever higher than 98.6 oral or 99.6 rectal within the past 24 hours.
4. Unusual skin appearance; i.e. ringworm, poison ivy
5. Sore throat
6. Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea within the past 12 hours.
7. Questionable eye redness, drainage, or inability to open eyelid upon awakening in the morning.
8. Runny nose due to infection
9. Fever blisters or cold sores of Herpes Simplex I.

Please notify the Program Director immediately if you discover that your child is contagious.

Parents will be notified when a child becomes ill and must be picked up immediately. The child will be isolated and made as comfortable as possible until you arrive to take him/her home.

An accident report will be completed any time a child is injured at Fortress. This will be kept in the child's file and the parent will be notified either immediately or when the child is picked up.

In the event that a critical illness or injury requires the immediate attention of a physician, emergency procedures will be performed in the following order:

1. Emergency medical services will be called
2. The child will be given emergency first-aid treatment or CPR when needed
3. The physician listed in your child's record will be contacted
4. Parents will be contacted. If they cannot be reached, contact will be made with one of the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Building Blocks Early Learning Center: Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes. They will be involved in painting, gluing, cooking projects, etc. Please dress them appropriately. Every effort will be made to protect their clothing but accidents do happen. *Children should bring a change of clothes.* Please make sure all items are marked so that we may return your child's things to his/her bag.

Please no flip flops.

Personal toys are discouraged. Please leave these at home unless the item is requested by the teacher or is needed by your child at rest time.

Other Programs: To be successful, students are asked to bring a backpack or folder to organize their school work.

Students are asked NOT to bring cell phones, MP3 players, etc... or other personal items. Fortress Youth Development Center will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND HEALTH ISSUES

Building Blocks Early Learning Center: Each child enrolled in or admitted to Building Blocks Early Learning Center must have completed all immunizations required for his/her age group by the date of admission. A copy of the immunization record must be on file in our office. Please notify the Director of any new immunizations your child receives during the school year. The Texas Department of Health does allow for exemptions on an individual basis if specified criteria are met.

Other Programs: Immunization records for children enrolled in public school are not required. It is assumed that immunization is current.

*"Children are likely to live up to what we believe in them."
-Lady Bird Johnson*

Welcome to Fortress Youth Development Center!

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

All Fortress Youth Development Center programs require registration, including authorization signatures, appropriate releases, and completed emergency contact information.

TUITION

Due to the generosity of donors and dedicated volunteers, Fortress YDC does not charge tuition for its programs. Instead, your child's enrollment will require a monthly donation of supplies. We ask that for each child enrolled, you provide two cartons of juice pouches or boxes and 24 individually wrapped snacks each month.

This is not meant to be a hardship, but merely a support of our programs. If at any time this becomes a burden, please tell us.

CONTACT INFORMATION

We must be able to reach you AT ALL TIMES in case of an emergency. If any information on your enrollment form should change (address, telephone number, medical information, etc.), you are required to notify the Program Director IMMEDIATELY.

Also, be sure to notify us if the information for your emergency contacts should change.

If we provide transportation and your pick-up and drop-off points must change, please contact the Fortress office immediately. Please note, transportation is not guaranteed if a change is necessary.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!!

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Building Blocks Early Learning Center*

18 months (must be a stable walker) through PreK

- Monday & Wednesday, September-May from 9:30am to 2pm.

Fortress Literacy Center *

PreK through 8th grade

- Monday -Thursday, 3pm to 6:30pm
- Friday, 3pm to 6:30pm on occasion

Fortress Summer JAM

3 years through 8th grade

- Mon-Wed from 9:30am to 3pm.
- Thurs from 9:30am to 3pm will be weekly field trips for students earning the privilege.

*These programs follow the FWISD school year calendar, including bad weather days and bad weather day makeup days.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Parents may leave their child no earlier than the program's starting time. Please be prompt in picking up your child.

Building Blocks: Please avoid lingering when you bring your child as this often causes increased anxiety in the child. Remember to sign in every day and include phone numbers where you can be reached. **Other Programs:** Please sign your child out when leaving the program. If you must pick up early, please enter the building quietly and check in with a staff member.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children are released only to those listed on the registration form. Parent must notify the Program Director if someone other than themselves will be picking up. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.** If an emergency arises and you must call to authorize someone not listed to pick up your child, you will be asked a security question to identify yourself and identification will be required of the person picking up your child.

ATTENDANCE

We feel strongly that your child will benefit from consistent enrollment and committed attendance. Your child will adjust better with consistency. We have a fun, educational program planned and want them to benefit from the opportunities we offer.

Parents are asked to call the Fortress YDC office if your child will be absent. **Failure to notify us will result in an unexcused absence; three consecutive unexcused absences may result in dismissal.**

There is not a limit on excused absences, but if they become excessive, you may be asked to withdraw your child so that a student on the waiting list can participate.

Special note to parents of Fortress Literacy Center Students: When considering whether to enroll your child in the after school program, understand that consistent attendance is expected.

This program has a developed curriculum designed to strengthen your child's academic performance. One day's programming builds on the next. For maximum effectiveness, your child should attend all rotations each day. With that in mind, please do your very best to schedule appointments on Fridays and plan not to pick up your child before 5:45pm.

TRANSPORTATION

Building Blocks Early Learning Center: Transportation to/from this program is **not** available.

Fortress Literacy Center-Elementary: Transportation to the after school program is provided if the student attends one of four elementary schools in the near southeast Fort Worth area: Van Zandt Guinn, Morningside, Charles Nash or I.M. Terrell. Morningside Middle School students will be met at the bus stop nearest Fortress. *(Based on the current year's enrollment, YDC retains the option to change the service-area.)*

Summer JAM: Transportation to/from this program is **not** available. Fortress-owned vehicles will be reserved for field trips.