



Parent Handbook

2026

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Mission Statement

At Willow and Oak Early Learning Center, we are dedicated to providing high-quality care within a joyful learning environment. Our commitment to age- and developmentally-appropriate activities ensures that each child engages in meaningful experiences that promote growth and independence. Our nurturing and knowledgeable teachers build structured routines that create a sense of security and use positive behavior guidance to teach rather than punish. We strive each day to uphold the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in everything we do.

Philosophy

We believe that childhood is a magical time of learning, exploring, and growing. Early childhood education should be experience-based, drawing on all developmental domains to create meaningful, engaging activities that support children as they explore their world, make connections, and build their independence. We also believe that children deserve to be treated with respect and dignity - we tolerate nothing less in our classrooms.

In our center, we value play, getting messy, making mistakes and trying again, feeling all of the feelings and finding words to go with them, treating each other with respect, progress over mastery, and the uniqueness of each and every child. We strive for joy-filled classrooms and happy children.

Enrollment & Admissions

Willow and Oak Early Learning Center caters to children from 6 weeks until they move on to kindergarten (ages 4 - 5). Willow and Oak Early Learning Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, handicap, ancestry or whether a child is being breastfed.

The enrollment process will begin with scheduling a walk-through of our facilities. This will allow you and your child to meet the teachers, see the classrooms, and voice any questions or concerns you may have. During this walk-through, there will also be an informal interview process between prospective families and the director that allows us to be sure that we are able to meet the needs of the child prior to enrollment.

At the walk-through, you will receive an application packet, a checklist with the documents we will need to keep on file, and a checklist for things your child will need to bring on or before their first day.

Registration

There is a \$100 non-refundable registration fee. If needed, this fee may be paid in two \$50 installments. The first is due before the child's first day. The second is due no later than 14 days after the child's first day.

A child is considered registered when all of the required paperwork has been submitted and at least the first installment of the registration fee has been paid.

Failure to pay the second installment of the registration fee by the 14-day deadline will result in the child being un-enrolled, unless arrangements have been made with the director.

Withdrawal

If, for any reason, you decide to withdraw your child, a minimum of two weeks' notice must be given. Even if the child does not attend for any portion of the final two weeks, the full tuition for those weeks will still be charged.

Notice of intent to withdraw must be submitted in writing (in print, via the Child Pilot app, or by email) to the owner/director.

Fee Policy

Tuition is \$165 per week. This is a flat rate for all students, regardless of age.

Payments may be made weekly, biweekly, or monthly. All payments are due before the subsequent time period (i.e., on Mondays for that week, or the 1st of the month for that month).

Our center relies on prompt payment of tuition in order to function efficiently. Accounts that are 6 weeks or more past due will be closed, with the child(ren) unenrolled from the center. The debt may be sent to a collection agency.

To keep up with the inflating costs of supplies and to be able to continue to pay our teachers fairly, an annual 3-5% increase in tuition can be expected.

There is a multiple-child discount for families with two or more children enrolled as full-time students. Current tuition for additional children is \$115 per week.

There are no reductions in tuition for absences due to illness, closures for emergencies or weather events, or weeks during which we are closed less than three days for holidays. The week of Christmas, during which we are closed for three days, tuition will be reduced by half.

An annual supply fee of \$75 will be charged one calendar year after enrollment. For those children who were enrolled before the acquisition, this fee will be due annually on the last day of August. For all children enrolling after January 2025, the fee will be due by the end of the month that marks the one-year anniversary of enrollment, and then annually by the last day of that month each year after that.

A \$10 late fee will be assessed for any instance in which a child is picked up after 5:30 pm on a regular weekday, or after the announced time for any early dismissals unless prior arrangements have been made with the director. At 5:30 (or early dismissal time), the parent/guardian will be called. If we cannot get in contact with a parent or guardian, we will begin to call the additional adults listed on the child's master card who are approved for pick-up. If no parent, guardian, or approved adult can be reached and the child is not picked up within thirty minutes of closing, the police will be contacted.

In the event that changes in a family's circumstances dictate that a child will need to be absent from the center for an extended period of time, each family will have the ability to take a leave of absence. This will consist of six consecutive weeks during which time regular tuition will be reduced by 50%, and the space will be held for your child's return. At the end of the six weeks, tuition will either return to the full amount, or the child will be considered withdrawn.

Necessary Supplies

We ask that each child brings the following items to be kept at the center:

- Two or three full changes of clothes (weather appropriate)
- Diapers and wipes
- Pacifier (for children one or younger)
- A blanket for naptime (for children one and older)
- A wearable blanket for infants for naptime (optional)
 - All infants must sleep in a crib without a loose blanket or stuffed toys, etc
- Diaper rash cream, if still in diapers

Cups will be provided by the center.

Blankets will be washed no less than once per week. We do wash them on-site. If your child has any sensitivities to detergents, etc, you may request that it be sent home for washing.

* Nap rolls will be sent home for washing because they do not fit in our on-site machine.

Any surplus of diapers and wipes that do not fit in individual cubbies will be labelled with the child's name and stored for when they are needed. Our storage is limited, so we ask that parents refrain from sending full cases of diapers/wipes at once.

Trial Periods and Trouble Adjusting

We understand that finding the right childcare setting can be challenging, and that for some children, the transition into group childcare can be a difficult one. Therefore, we have policies and procedures in place for handling such cases.

The first two weeks of a child's enrollment are considered a 'trial period'. During this time, the parent or guardian will have the opportunity to withdraw their child without the required two-week notice.

For children who are struggling to adjust, our courses of action include the following:

- Working with parents to create a smooth, efficient drop-off routine
- Finding ways to bridge home and the classroom with songs/books/routines
- Making time and space in the classroom to help the child get comfortable (favorite activities waiting, room to calm down one-on-one with a teacher, etc)
- If possible (and in cases where the child is really struggling to adjust to the point of causing disruption in the classroom), we have found that starting the child with short intervals (2-3 hours) and then gradually increasing to full days is helpful for building trust in the fact that their grown-ups always come back

In the rare case that a child is not adjusting/settling into the classrooms after at least six consecutive weeks and after all reasonable efforts have been made to help them adjust, the owner/director may decide to withdraw the child from enrollment.

Behaviors Incompatible with the Classroom Environment

In rare cases, group care is not a good fit for a child. Behavior that either causes harm to themselves, another child, or to staff, or has the potential to cause harm to themselves, another child, or to staff that are not able to be effectively redirected or curbed by typical behavior management techniques will not be tolerated.

These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Biting repeatedly (for children 2+)
- Physical aggression beyond what is considered developmentally appropriate for toddlers
- Behaviors that are destructive to the center's property beyond what is considered typical for toddler play

- A consistent refusal to participate in classroom activities that causes disruption to the flow of the day or pulls the teacher's attention away from the class as a whole

All reasonable efforts will be made to coordinate with families and provide appropriate support for children who exhibit challenging behaviors, including appropriate referrals to outside agencies as needed. These efforts will always include either or both an in-person meeting with the parents/guardians, the director, and the child's teacher or a letter from the director sent home detailing the behaviors and next steps. If we are unable to curb or redirect the behaviors and the safety of anyone in our care or employment is considered at risk, the child may be withdrawn at the discretion of the director.

Sign-In And Sign-Out Procedure

Each parent or guardian must walk their child in each day. It is the responsibility of the person dropping the child off to check the child in at the kiosk located in the front hallway and bring your child to the designated classroom. We will not be responsible for any child that is allowed to walk into the facility alone.

Upon pick-up, you will sign the child out on the kiosk. No child can be picked up by anyone other than an authorized pick-up as designated in the Child Pilot app.

Drop-off runs from 6:30 am to 9:00 am. If a child must be dropped off late due to a doctor's appointment or other circumstances, arrangements should be made with the director and the child should be fed breakfast before being dropped off.

Hours of Operation & Holidays

Our regular hours of operation are: Monday through Friday, from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Our Holiday Closures are as follows:

New Year's Day: January 1

MLK Day: January 19

Good Friday: April 3

Memorial Day: May 25

Labor Day: September 7

Thanksgiving: November 26 & 27th

Christmas: December 23rd, 24th, & 25th

New Year's Eve: December 31 (early dismissal, 2pm)

Professional Development Closures

Each quarter (in February, May, August, and November), we will select a Friday to hold a professional development meeting for our teachers. These dates will be given at least three weeks in advance. On these dates, we will have early dismissal at 4 pm. The children will be served breakfast, lunch, and snack as normal.

These meetings allow us to enhance the knowledge and skills of our staff so that we can continue to provide the highest quality of care for the children we serve.

Dress Code

We want the children in our care to be free to dive into their learning enthusiastically with their whole selves. Play-based learning gets messy!

We ask that you send your child in comfortable clothes that allow them to move easily.

If they are able to use the toilet, they must be in clothes they can take off and put on easily on their own.

All children who are walking must be sent with shoes **EVERY DAY**.

Please DO NOT send your child in:

- Flip-flops or shoes that do not stay on their feet when they run/walk
- Clothes that you would not want to get stained or dirty
- Clothes that unnecessarily restrict movement
- Clothes that make diaper changes difficult to complete efficiently (such as overalls or onesies with snaps all down the legs or that do not come undone at the legs)
- Hats, belts, or sunglasses
- Tops that expose their midriff
- Rompers without snaps
- Diapers without velcro-like tabs (no 360 diapers)

Food Policies

Breakfast will be served from 8 o'clock to 8:45 AM. If your child arrives after 8:45 please feed them breakfast before they arrive.

For all days during which we observe normal business hours, we will serve breakfast, lunch, and a daily snack. Each quarter, we will send a calendar detailing the planned menu rotation. If a child has special dietary needs that would necessitate bringing their own meals, please discuss this with the director.

Bottles must be labeled with a child's name or initials on the cap and bottle. Formula or breastmilk can be sent prepared and ready to feed so that upon arrival it can be refrigerated then warmed when it is time to use OR the bottles can be sent filled with the correct amount of water and we will add the formula to at the time of feeding. It is also permissible to leave bottles, a gallon of water, and a can of formula for us to mix as needed for feedings.

Refreshments for special occasions, such as birthday or holiday parties are allowed with prior approval from the Director so that any allergies can be discussed. All food must be prepackaged and store-bought

Medication

Medication will be administered upon the completion of the proper paperwork.

Medication MUST be in its original packaging (including the box) and labelled with the child's name. Prescription medication must include the full, original, legible label on the bottle.

We will not administer medication that suppresses symptoms of any contagious condition that would necessitate a child being excluded from the center (i.e. ibuprofen or acetaminophen to reduce fever caused by a virus).

All Willow and Oak staff maintain current medication administration training and certificates.

Parental Access & Involvement

Parents are allowed to visit the center any time during regular operating hours and when children are present. Parents are allowed to see classrooms, play spaces, learning materials, curriculum plans upon request.

Each calendar year, Willow and Oak will host (at a minimum) two opportunities for parental involvement, such as an open house, holiday parties, parent education sessions, etc. These events will be announced in advance via the Child Pilot app and via a flyer near the check-in kiosk.

Emergency Closure

When the Lafourche Parish School Board deems it necessary to cancel school due to weather conditions or an emergency situation, our daycare will follow the same procedure. If an emergency situation occurs during our opening hours, we will notify parents to pick up their children. Children must be picked up within 30 minutes.

In the event an emergency closure is needed when school is out of session, we will rely on local news sources and make a decision that ensures the safety of the children.

Notifications will be sent out via the Child Pilot app.

Illness

We realize that it is difficult for working parents to keep their children home, but exclusion from the center is sometimes necessary to prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of every child. Children should be kept home from the center if they are feverish, have diarrhea and/or vomiting, or if they are showing signs of becoming sick (listlessness/ drowsiness, productive sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, etc.) See exclusion criteria following this section for specifics. If your child cannot comfortably participate in the day's usual activities or your child should stay indoors and/or have additional rest, these signs are generally indicative that the child should not be at daycare.

Willow and Oak has established guidelines in accordance with state childcare law and other best practices concerning sick children. In case of a communicable disease or condition, and at the discretion of the director, other parents will be notified to watch for symptoms in their children.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, every effort will be made to make them comfortable and keep them away from the other children but with a familiar caregiver. A parent will immediately be called to come and pick them up. We are not able to provide arrangements to care for sick children. Parents are required to respond as soon as possible concerning the sick child when contacted by staff. If we cannot reach the parent within thirty minutes, we will reach out to the family's emergency contacts as stated on enrollment forms/Master Card. Children must be picked up within 30 minutes of contact. If the illness warrants, the child's pediatrician will be contacted for consultation.

We will send a child home:

- Upon the first instance of vomiting
- Upon the first instance of diarrhea that is not contained in a diaper or that occurs as an accident in potty-trained children
- Upon the third instance of diarrhea that is contained in a diaper or in the toilet
- When a child presents with a fever of 100.4 or higher

Children may attend with minor illnesses if they are not contagious and it does not affect the child's ability to participate in the day's routine. Minor illnesses include: Mild respiratory infections, acute infections subsiding after treatment and with a physician's permission, or mild cold symptoms without a fever.

If the child's health deteriorates at some point in the day, the parent will be contacted to come to pick them up. It is always helpful if you can provide a doctor's note when applicable.

Please use the following chart for exclusion criteria:



I HAVE A FEVER	I AM VOMITING	I HAVE DIARRHEA	I HAVE A RASH	I HAVE HEAD LICE	I HAVE AN EYE INFECTION	I HAVE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL
						
Temperature of 100° F or higher	Within the past 24 hours	Within the past 24 hours	Body rash with oozing, drainage or fever	Check with your school district policy	Redness, itching, and/or pus draining from eye	Hospital stay and/or emergency room visit

I am ready to go back to school when I am...

Fever free without the assistance of medication for 24 hours (i.e., Tylenol, Motrin, Advil)	Free from vomiting for 24 hours.	Free from diarrhea for 24 hours.	Free from rash or fever and have been evaluated by my doctor if needed.	Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home.	Free from drainage and/or have been evaluated by my doctor if needed.	Released by my medical provider to return to school.
 It's ok to have a runny nose and/or small cough.						

If your child has strep throat or another bacterial infection, he/she should stay home until the antibiotic has been given for at least 24 hours and your health care provider has given permission for your child to return to school. We encourage you to seek medical attention when your child is sick and to follow your health care provider's recommendations about returning to school and other activities.

*This chart is not an exhaustive list of the communicable diseases and policies for exclusion from childcare. For more information, please contact the director.

Abuse and Neglect

Per subsection 1509.A.1. of Louisiana Bulletin 137:

- A. An early learning center shall establish in writing, prominently post or show parent's signature of receipt, implement, and adhere to the following policies:
 1. Child abuse and neglect policy:
 - a. As mandated reporters, all staff and owners shall report any allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child to the Louisiana Child Protection Statewide Hotline (855) 4LA-KIDS [(8550-452-5437)].
 - b. An early learning center shall not delay the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Protection Statewide Hotline in order to conduct an internal investigation to verify the abuse or neglect allegations; and
 - c. An early learning center shall not require staff to report suspected abuse or neglect to the center or management prior to reporting it to the Child Protection Statewide Hotline.

Items from Home

Items from home are not permitted in the center. This includes toys, stuffed animals, trinkets, bracelets/necklaces and the like. These items often cause disruptions in the classrooms. If your child is struggling with the transition at drop-off, please contact the director/owner to discuss strategies for making the transition easier without the use of items from home.

Willow and Oak Early Learning Center, LLC. is not responsible for lost or broken items that have been brought from home.

Discipline Policy

At Willow and Oak, we believe discipline should be a means to teach rather than punish. Therefore, the following practices are put into place:

In the infant room:

Gentle guidance is used to correct any unsafe or unwanted behavior. This may include removing a child from somewhere they have climbed/crawled, gently redirecting unwanted behavior with a reminder of wanted/appropriate behavior or by offering another activity, and modeling the wanted behavior.

In the toddler room:

We build on the gentle guidance we have established in the infant room. When children are hitting, climbing, or acting in other ways that are unsafe to themselves, other children, or the classroom materials, gentle redirection and reminders are always the first course of action. If needed, activities may be ended or changed, or children may be separated and given time and

space to calm down. We also seek to understand the root causes of behavior, so that any implemented strategies are as effective as possible. **“Time out” and “quiet time” is prohibited by Louisiana licensing regulations for children under the age of two.**

In the preschool room:

We continue with the gentle guidance, but also begin to lean into natural and logical consequences. So, when unwanted behaviors arise, such as throwing toys or hitting other children, we begin with redirecting the behavior to an appropriate avenue. If that is ineffective, we follow through with pre-established rules, such as “if you keep throwing the blocks, we will have to put them away”. When possible, we allow children to help self-correct, such as helping to clean the walls if they color on them, or helping a child they’ve hit with an ice pack or bandage. In this age range, with repeated unwanted behaviors, we will occasionally use “quiet times”, in which the child is removed from play and sits with the teacher for one minute per year of age. They are never left alone, and this time is used to remind the child of appropriate behaviors and help them to make better choices going forward. This time may also be used to connect with the child, find the root of the behavior, and work together to find appropriate ways to meet the needs they are expressing.

In any classroom, all discipline is meant to teach appropriate behavior in a positive, respectful way. We do not tolerate children being spoken down to, belittled, yelled at, or left alone in a ‘time out’. Cruel, severe, unusual or corporal punishment will never be used on a child - not even at the parent’s request. This includes: spanking, tapping of the hand, etc. No child or group of children will be allowed to discipline another child. No child will be deprived of meals or snacks (or threatened with such deprivation) for any reason.

Per Bulletin 137, it is prohibited that any child be subject to any of the following:

- i. Physical or corporal punishment which includes but is not limited to yelling, slapping, spanking, yanking, shaking, pinching, exposure to extreme temperatures or other measures producing physical pain, putting anything in the mouth of a child, requiring a child to exercise, or placing a child in an uncomfortable position.
- ii. Verbal abuse, which includes but is not limited to using offensive or profane language, telling a child to “shut up,” or making derogatory remarks about children or family members of children in the presence of children;
- iii. The threat of a prohibited action even if there is no intent to follow through with the threat;
- iv. Being disciplined by another child;
- v. being bullied by another child;
- vi. Being deprived of food or beverages;
- vii. Being restrained by devices such as high chairs or feeding tables for disciplinary purposes; and
- viii. Having active play time withheld for disciplinary purposes, except timeout may be used during active play time for an infraction incurred during the playtime.

Behavior Issues

As a rule, we believe that all behavior is communication, and we will make every effort to work with families to determine the best course of action that meets the child's underlying needs while allowing the classroom to continue to function as necessary.

Because we provide child-care and education in a group setting, we will monitor the behavior of all children closely. If there comes a time where the safety of other children is involved, we may ask a parent/guardian to remove the child from the center for a specific amount of time. This is to give the child a break while the teacher, director, and parents/guardians work to find out what underlying issues may have prompted the behavior. If concerning behavior continues, we may ask the parent/guardian to remove the child indefinitely.

See the section on 'Behaviors Incompatible with the Classroom Environment' for further information.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of all children's records shall be maintained at all times. Employees of the center shall not disclose or knowingly permit the disclosure of any information concerning the child, his/her family, directly, or indirectly, to any unauthorized person. This includes individuals other than the parent/guardian while at pick-up or drop-off, unless the parent/guardian has provided specific permission for the named individual to receive such information in writing, and given to the director personally.

If you believe an employee of the center has disclosed any information about your child, please report your concerns to the director as soon as possible.

Transportation

Willow and Oak Early Learning Center does not provide any transportation, except in the case that an emergency necessitates the immediate evacuation of the area (not just the premises). In the event such an emergency occurs, parents will be immediately notified via the Child Pilot app and (once children are safely relocated) by phone call.

Water Play

During the summer months, the center may opt to have water days that include a sprinkler or water table for children one and up. Children will never be left unsupervised during such activities. We will never have any standing bodies of water in which the children can be submersed, such as wading pools, kiddie pools, etc.

Electronic Devices and Computers

Electronic devices, including but limited to television, movies, games, videos, computers, and hand-held electronic devices shall adhere to following limitations per Louisiana Bulletin 137:

- a. Electronic device activities for children under age two are prohibited, and
- b. Time allowed for electronic device activities for children ages two and above shall not exceed two hours per day, with the exception that television, DVD, or video viewing shall be limited to no more than one hour per day.

Bulletin 137 also states that:

- a. Programs, movies, and video games with violent or adult content, including but not limited to soap operas, television news, and sports programs aimed at audiences other than children, shall not be permitted in the presence of children;
- b. All television, DVD, or other programming shall be suitable for the youngest child present;
- c. "PG" programming or its television equivalent shall not be shown to children under age five;
- d. "PG" programming shall only be viewed by children age five and above and shall require written parental authorization;
- e. Any programming with a rating more restrictive than "PG" is prohibited;
- f. All video games shall be suitable for the youngest child with access to the games:
 - i. "E10+" rated games shall be permitted for children ages 10 years and older
 - ii. "T" and "M" rated games are prohibited

At Willow and Oak Early Learning Center, electronic devices (such as television or viewing videos) are used sparingly. Screen time is not a daily practice, but a tool to use for classroom management. Teachers are encouraged to only use them when:

- a. Weather keeps them from bringing the children outdoors and children are getting restless with provided indoor activities
 - i. For these, we use videos such as Danny Go or other sing-alongs that get them up and moving/dancing
- b. Children are struggling with an extended wait or transition and are no longer engaging with other means of keeping their attention (singing, playing games, conversations, picture cards, etc)
 - i. For these, if videos are used, they must be educational. SuperWhy, Numberblocks, Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, Dora the Explorer, or other PBS shows may be used

No electronic devices that allow internet shall be accessed by children who are in the care of Willow and Oak Early Learning Center Staff. Communication

Communication

There is a bulletin board located in the front hallway of the center. This board includes pertinent information regarding our center. Please check this space regularly to keep yourself updated and informed.

The director is available via phone, text, or email between the hours of 6:30am and 6:30pm Monday - Friday. Anything outside of this time may not be addressed until the next business day, unless it is deemed an emergency.

Child Pilot Software

Our center uses an application called Child Pilot. Parents/guardians and other adults authorized to pick up or drop off children will be able to install the app directly on their phone. If needed, the program is available for desktop use as well.

Child Pilot streamlines much of our day to day processes. It will be used to:

- Check children in and out
- Track attendance
- Message between teachers, staff, and parents/guardians
- Log meals, naps, diaper changes/bathroom trips, etc
- Log incident reports in case of injury
- Provide pictures or short videos
- Send reminders about diapers, wipes, or other needed supplies

If you have any questions about ChildPilot or how we use it in our classroom, please reach out to the director during the business hours listed above.

Notice of Information Disclosure

Per Louisiana Bulletin 137:Louisiana Early Learning Center Licensing Regulations,

Parents and guardians are advised that the licensing authority for Willow and Oak Early Learning Center is the Louisiana Department of Education, which can be reached via phone at **225-342-9905** or email at **LDELicensing@la.gov** with any significant, unresolved licensing complaints.

Acknowledgement

I, _____ have read and agree to the terms laid
(parent or guardian)
out in the parenting handbook.

(parent or guardian signature)

(date)

(provider signature)

(date)