

Welcome to the Red Room, younger toddlers

We are very excited to help foster your child's learning, play, and growth this year! Research shows that very young children do well when they have consistent routines and caregivers, as well as meaningful interactions that encourage prosocial behaviors and creativity. Here in the Red Room we focus on these interactions, exposure to materials and experiences, and consistent routines/schedules to support your child's development and set them up for success as they journey through the toddler years. Included in this letter is essential information for helping your child to transition smoothly, engage happily, and have a great year with us.

Teacher Contact and Information: Teachers may be contacted through our Brightwheel app, or by calling the front office. Teachers will have tablets only, not phones so we typically will not be able to receive or respond to texts. Lead teacher can be contacted through email at shannonl@fumcaustin.org or at 512-740-8299. Please call the office number during the school day, or message through the Brightwheel App. We always appreciate knowing when friends won't be coming in for the day or will be later than usual. Backpacks will be used to hold any art, papers, or clothes from the day (bigger may be better). Activities for the month/week will be posted on the bulletin outside of our room, and will ALSO be emailed to parents either monthly, or as needs of the children shift. Included in this packet is a provisional daily schedule and the lesson plan for the first week.

Drop Off and Daily Schedule:

When parents arrive, they will:

1. **Check in on our app.**
2. Walk your child in, and complete a goodbye routine. This will include placing a LABELED SNACK in the labeled container, placing a FULL WATER BOTTLE/SIPPY CUP in the labeled container, backpack in cubby, and washing your child's hands. Please hand lunch bags to your child's teacher. We will provide a sharpie if snacks need to be labeled.
3. Either teacher will then meet you at the door to welcome your child and take temperatures. At this point, children and parents will say their goodbyes/last hugs/hi-fives. Children will be offered snack and then play freely until it is time to go outside. Snack time is promptly before outside time; if your child arrives later than 9:30, they will be offered their snack with lunch.

When picking up children, parents will:

1. Check out their child using the QR code on the outside door, or on the wall directly next to the classroom door. You will need to open Brightwheel and click the check out button, and then scan the QR code with the Brightwheel app.
2. Teachers will then escort your child to the door to say goodbye.

PICKUP TIME is **1:45** for the regular school day, and 2:45 for after school care. Late fees will be charged beginning at 2:00 and WILL BE INVOICED as part of tuition. After School Care children need to be picked up between 2:30 and 2:45. Please be prompt as teachers still need to spray down toys and wipe down shelves after the children leave.

Lunchtime Tips:

- Please send solid food/finger foods that are cut into bite size pieces and ready to serve (including **peeled** oranges, **peeled** bananas, cut up pieces of boiled egg, and cut up all meats including seafood/shellfish/nuggets/tenders.)
- Cheese Sticks or String Cheese will need to be **cut up** into bite sized pieces appropriate for your child. Please do not send whole unopened cheese sticks or whole unopened string cheese.
- Keep in mind that we will not serve **chocolate** in any form, flavored or unflavored milk, juice that is not 100% juice, fruit snacks of any kind (including Annie's Bunny gummies), cookies, or non-nutritive chips (Doritos/Fritos/Takis, etc). Pirate's Booty, pita chips, and Veggie Straws are great options.
- We cannot serve foods considered choking hazards including: **raw vegetables (with the exception of cucumbers and matchstick carrots), whole grapes, dried fruit, popcorn, hotdogs unless quartered, regular pretzel sticks or knots of any kind (flat chip pretzels are a good substitute). Also we are a nut free school. Sunflower butter is a great alternative.**
- Feel free to speak with us if you are curious about your child's preferences during the day. Please note: WE DO NOT WARM UP FOODS. **Sometimes food that was warm at dinner, will be rejected when served cold the next day.** Consider a thermos if your child is this type of kiddo, or picnic type foods instead of leftovers. Please do not send frozen foods as they may not thaw quickly enough to be appropriate for lunch.
- Lunches are served quickest when in one easy to open, age appropriate container (or bento box), in a lunch bag with an ice pack. Please note materials such as glass are not considered appropriate for this age group. We find baggies to be hard for this age to open up independently. In the New Year we will move to using plates and utensils. All liquids must be in a **labeled non-spill** sippy cup or sports top type water bottle **with a lid**. We will label all unlabeled containers, cups, and foods with Sharpie as necessary. This is a licensing and accreditation standard, as well as to address children not being able to say whose is whose food yet. See me if you have questions about your individual child. Please label all lunch bags, containers, bento boxes, and sippy cups with **first name and last initial**.

Clothing: We absolutely plan on getting dirty this year whether with art and sensory activities or playing outside. Please send extra clothes that are **weather appropriate** to change into during the day. Extra clothes should be packed in a gallon sized plastic bag, labeled with the child's name as they will be kept in the classroom, not in backpacks or cubbies. If anything is very special, hard to wash, pajamas, hard to change your child's diaper through (**please no actual overalls or one piece rompers without snaps**) or you would prefer it not be dirty/stained, we suggest you keep it at home. Also, while dressing children for school please remember that we will go outside every day unless there is severe weather. Please make sure clothing is easy to climb/walk/crawl/roll in (longer play dresses tend to trip our friends up).

All children will need **HARD SOLED, WALKING OUTSIDE APPROPRIATE, CLOSE TOED** shoes. This is mainly to protect their feet from scooter wheels/rocking toys/other hard soled shoes, etc outside. Sandals are not considered appropriate as they do not protect feet from rolling wheels, stubbing toes, or being stepped on.

Things to Bring on First Day of Class OR during your classroom visit:

Extra change of clothes, in a gallon sized bag with the bag labeled.

Diapers/diaper ointment labeled with your child's name; please bring diapers in their sleeves. We find it works best when children bring about a half a pack (or one sleeve) at a time. We will message you when your child is running low.

Rolling sleep mat (we will provide padded material type mats to put them on). Sleepsacks are mainly used while sleeping in crib (licensing does not allow any blankets or coverings to be used). Children may also bring: standard sized crib sheets and a blanket to cover with as an alternative. **PLEASE LABEL ALL MATS/SHEETS/BLANKETS.**

Comfort Items – Pacifiers will be used as needed, but our focus in this class will be to rely on them as briefly as possible (usually naptime), and they will be kept in cubbies during the day. Loveys/stuffed animal types of toys can be provided as transitional/rest/comfort items by kiddos. All other toys from home will stay in cubbies for the day.

Family Boards! Each family should receive at their class visit a small poster board to put pictures of immediate or close family members (parents/grandparents/nanny's and other caregivers if applicable/pets). Please label photos however you like; we use these when we talk about family, as comfort objects, as distractions, as language starters, and children love to point at people they recognize. Lots of Social Emotional milestones tied to this so PLEASE complete the board you are given, and bring it by the end of the first week of school. You can also bring one during your Classroom Visit if you prefer: we usually provide half of a standard poster size sheet found at Walmart or HEB or Target.

A Note About Naps:

We understand and appreciate that this age group may be transitioning from two naps to one, or be used to sleeping at varying times of the day. A rest time will be offered as noted on our schedule. Most children adjust to sleeping as a group by the first few weeks, but some children may experience extra tiredness or changes in wake up and night time sleep as they adjust. This is normal, and typically settles out as children adjust and get older. We request that when children need to come in late for any reason, that they stick to their regular wake up schedules as much as possible. We also ask that parents try to keep appointments before or after the school day to keep the schedule as consistent as possible as this is paramount to a predictable day. This includes NOT picking up children in the middle of nap time as it can be disruptive not only for your kiddo's schedule, but other kiddos as they are learning to sleep independently. Of course, like every rule, there are always exceptions:) Feel free to reach out as needed!

See you Soon!

Ms. Shannon