

Dear Staff Member or Volunteer:

Welcome to My Time Kids Academy!

At My Time Kids Academy (MTKA), we take our responsibility to care for children very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for MTKA volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting children, you, and the mission of MTKA. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Lorie Baez
My Time Kids Academy
Owner/ Founder

My Time Kids Academy

Safety Policies & Procedures/ Appropriate Interactions

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Overview of the My Time Kids Academy Safety System

Because we care for children and desire to protect them, MTKA requires all volunteers and staff members to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** *before employment or volunteer work begins.*

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training

My Time Kids Academy policies and procedures require that volunteers and staff members avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Volunteers and staff members are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of MTKA Administration.

Volunteers and staff members should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in ‘grooming’ a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or ‘gatekeeper’), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip our volunteers and staff members with information necessary to protect a child from sexual abuse or maltreatment, MTKA requires all volunteers and staff members to complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided live or online through Abuse Prevention Systems (www.AbusePreventionSystems.com) or AgriLife Child Maltreatment (<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/solutions/child-care-training-courses/>).

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training is required for all volunteers and staff members and must be renewed annually per Texas Minimum Standards Childcare Regulation and MTKA requirements.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Volunteers and staff members are required to complete the MTKA Screening Process, which requires volunteers and staff members to:

- complete an Employment Application
- complete a face-to-face interview
- complete Form 2985, Affidavit for Applicants for Employment with a Licensed Operation
- complete Form 2971, Childcare Licensing Request for Background Check
- provide references to be checked.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Volunteers and staff members are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

My Program requires that all volunteers and staff members undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

PARENT TRAINING

In an effort to increase parent awareness of abuse and maltreatment of children, MTKA offers resources for Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training to all parents of children attending My Time Kids Academy. The written materials referenced above are available in the Resources section of the Abuse Prevention Systems or the MinistrySafe websites.

Child Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

My Time Kids Academy has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in MTKA programs and activities. It is the responsibility of all volunteers and staff members at MTKA to act in the best interest of each child in every aspect of our program.

In the event that volunteers, or staff members, observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the observations to an immediate supervisor or member of MTKA Administration.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

My Time Kids Academy is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the MTKA Administration/ Directors and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor or a member of MTKA Administration.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of MTKA Administration.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

My Time Kids Academy staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all MTKA policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of MTKA Administration.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, MTKA staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse of a child should be directed to an immediate supervisor, or member of MTKA Administration.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROHIBITED OR HARMFUL ACT

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction and MTKA activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agency.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children or vulnerable populations at My Time Kids Academy. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from MTKA immediately.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children or vulnerable populations at MTKA.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at My Time Kids Academy are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to MTKA Administration or Director on Duty.

State laws vary concerning mandatory reporters and mandatory reporting requirements. Teachers, nurses and day care employees, for example, are considered mandatory reporters. Further, state laws are changing reporting requirements – usually expanding the list of mandatory reporters and shortening the ‘reasonable’ time periods for a report. In 2013, the state of Texas modified Chapter 261.101(b) of the Texas Family Code (reporting statute) such that ‘professionals’ (teachers, nurses, doctors, day care employees, more) must personally make a report to the appropriate authorities ... “a professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report”.

A staff member or volunteer will immediately notify an immediate supervisor or Administrator. Together with the immediate supervisor or Administrator, the staff member or volunteer will make a report to the Child Abuse authorities 1-800-252-5400. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate Texas authorities.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the MTKA administrator will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. My Time Kids Academy administrator will be notified as soon as reasonably possible- preferably immediately.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

My Time Kids Academy will take appropriate action on behalf of the Program when a report of abuse occurs.

Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously, and will be reported in accordance with this policy to the MTKA administrator. If appropriate, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400), or Child Protective Services (817-321-8680) will be notified. For more information regarding responsibilities to report suspicions of abuse or neglect, see page ___ of the Employee Handbook.

WHEN A CHILD HAS BEEN VICTIMIZED

If a staff member or volunteer has knowledge or a suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to supervisory staff and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

In addition to notifying the appropriate authorities, My Time Kids Academy will provide the child or the child's parent/caregiver/guardian with information to allow the child (or parent, on the child's behalf) to obtain assistance and intervention, as well as available counseling options.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Nursery-age children

Because very young children may require complete assistance with their bathroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- 1) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- 2) Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- 3) Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- 4) Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- 5) Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- 6) Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- 1) No child will be forced to toilet train.
- 2) Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- 3) When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- 4) Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- 5) Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers or staff members. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.").
- 6) Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 7) "Accidents" should be handled by reassuring the child, and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from My Program in the children's area, if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

School-age children

School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.) Staff members and volunteers should never take a lone child to the restroom.

If a staff member or volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he or she should seek out another worker to accompany him/her. If another worker is not available to accompany, he/she should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains within the bathroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

Special needs

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals.

MEDICATION- see full policy in parent handbook

Medication may be given to a child by a staff member or volunteer with a doctor's prescription. The medication must be in the original packaging, including over the counter medication. The only exceptions to this policy are diaper ointment/medication and insect bite cream, after a parent information sheet is signed by a parent or guardian.

GIFT GIVING

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing special gifts to any individual child. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition (i.e., mention during announcements; have the entire group sing Happy Birthday, etc.) Any requests for variance from this policy must be addressed with MTKA Administration.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in the facility, during a MTKA activity, or while working with children at MTKA (see Employee Handbook). Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to children.

TOBACCO

My Time Kids Academy is a tobacco-free facility. MTKA requires staff members and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of children or their parents. MTKA staff members and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to children.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers at My Program should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

My Time Kids Academy recognizes that meeting program objectives may occasionally require that staff members and volunteers interact with children on an individual basis. Workers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with children:

Individual Meetings

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual child at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. There will be no one-to-one meetings between a staff member or a volunteer and a child behind closed doors. If a circumstance arises where a private one-to-one meeting does occur, the staff member or volunteers must notify My Time Kids Academy administration prior to the meeting.

Transportation

(My Time Kids Academy does not transport children. See Parent Handbook)

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for children. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of children:

- 1) Children should never be transported without parental permission.
- 2) Children should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
- 3) Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
- 4) No cell phones may be used by the driver while providing transportation for children.
- 5) Children should not use a vehicle belonging to a staff member or volunteer.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave their children in the care of MTKA staff members and volunteers for services and activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in MTKA activities.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to be a part of services and programs in which children are involved at MTKA (see Handbook). A parent accompanying child to any My Program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

VOLUNTEERS PARENTS

All Volunteer Parents will be required to complete a MTKA Volunteer Parent Application.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

My Time Kids Academy is committed to protecting the children in our care. MTKA has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of MTKA staff members or volunteers must foster trust at all times – personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in MTKA programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for a child's development, and are generally suitable in the MTKA setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the child's age. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to My Time Kids Academy administration/ directors.
3. Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or MTKA staff and volunteers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when more than two individuals are present and the touch is open to observation.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

At the end of the program day or activity, My Time Kids Academy volunteers and/or staff members are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated in writing by parents or legal guardians.

In the event that a staff member or volunteer is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, he/she should immediately locate or contact MTKA Administration before releasing the child.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging and online chat rooms.

POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

My Time Kids Academy staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on campus or MTKA property or in the presence of children. If any such materials are purportedly necessary for classroom instruction, they must be approved in advance by the Owner, Lorie Baez.

INTERNET/ELECTRONIC MEDIA

No computer at or related to MTKA is to be used by staff members, volunteers, children or volunteers to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy will lead to discipline from MTKA Administration and is grounds for termination. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with MTKA administration

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. My Time Kids Academy staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to provide nurturing care to children. Staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of My Time Kids Academy’s Safety Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at My Time Kids Academy.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by My Time Kids Academy.

I acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my position description. While, ideally, I will serve in this position for the full term specified in the position description, I understand that I am serving as a **volunteer** and that I may choose to end this service at any time. (If possible, I agree to provide two weeks’ notice to my supervisor). ***Volunteers initial here:**_____

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this policy statement in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between My Time Kids Academy and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for the hours I work.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of this policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer’s name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer’s signature

Date: _____

[This page to remain attached to the Safety Policies]

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

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[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to MTKA Administration]