

St. Dominic's DOMINICARE LEARNING CENTER *Handbook*



St. Dominic's

3780 I-55 North Frontage Road Jackson, MS 39211 601-200-4100

Dear Parents,

St. Dominic's is pleased to offer our employees and the community our childcare learning services. I can assure you that we operate under the same philosophy and high standards as all other programs and services offered by St. Dominic's.

Our purpose is to provide a happy and safe environment that will contribute to the growth and development of your child, not only intellectually, but also emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually. Our goal is to discover each child's special needs and find ways to meet them.

DominiCare is regulated by the Mississippi State Board of Health, whose inspections are based on specific standards relating to health, safety and proper childcare, as well as certain personnel requirements. We are also inspected by the Jackson Fire Department.

This handbook has been prepared for your information and ready reference. We ask that you become thoroughly familiar with its contents.

At St. Dominic's, we strive to provide an Exceptional Encounter Every time, and we value the confidence you place in us. Please be assured that every effort will be made to ensure personal care and attention for your child. Feel free to visit my office or call 601-200-4100.

Sincerely,

Fannie Harper

Director

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Philosophy and Goals

We believe each child is unique, created in God's image, and develops their talents and abilities as they continue to grow and mature. We also believe that every child should have the opportunity for a safe, stimulating and educational Christian environment.

We strive to:

- Respect that each child is unique and seek ways to help develop the uniqueness.
- Allow children freedom of expression even when their opinions differ from ours.
- Provide an atmosphere where each child can accept his/her limitations.
- Encourage each child to be a responsible citizen and provide opportunities for children to grow into that responsibility.
- Provide an atmosphere in which Christian ideals are experienced.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is based upon developmentally-appropriate practices which are supported by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

In recent years, a trend toward increased emphasis on formal instruction in academic skills has emerged in early childhood programs. This trend is based on misconceptions about early learning (Elkind, child psychologist). Despite the trend among some educators to formalize instruction, there has been no comparable evidence of change in what young children need for optimal development or how they learn; in fact, young children learn most effectively through a concrete, play-oriented approach.

The concept of developmental appropriateness has two dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness.

Age appropriateness means predictable changes occur in all domains of development – physical, emotional, social and cognitive.

Individual appropriateness means each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as an individual personality and learning style. Learning in young children is the result of interactions between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas and people. These experiences should match the child's developing abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding.

Although curriculum content is determined by many factors, the content and teaching strategies must be both age and individually appropriate.

Children's play is a primary vehicle for an indicator of their mental growth. Play enables children to progress along the developmental sequence (1) sensorimotor intelligence of infancy (2) preoperational thought in the preschool years and (3) the concrete operational thinking exhibited by primary children. In addition to having a role in cognitive development, play also serves important functions in physical, emotional and social development. Therefore, child-initiated, child-directed and teacher supported play are essential components of developmentally appropriate practice (Fein & Rivkin).

Just as DominiCare is consistent with its curriculum, a child must attend on a regular basis to benefit from this type of environment. One of our goals is to expose children to many different types of materials and experiences in order to prepare them for their ultimate level of education, Kindergarten. The children are involved in many different types of learning experiences throughout the day. The majority of the structured activities are during the morning hours. Parents are welcome to visit and see what is taking place.

Parent Conference

Parents are requested to participate in a conference with their child's teacher annually or at any time the parent or child's teacher feels that there is a need. These conferences should be scheduled in advance. Please do not just "drop in" for a conference with a teacher. An on-duty teacher must devote their time to the entire class. Staff is only allowed to discuss with parents behaviors pertinent to *their* child.

Staff Requirements

Dominicare shares in the excellence of St. Dominic's. Each DominiCare staff member has been carefully screened and chosen based on the following qualifications: a caring nature, a nurturing personality, education in the childcare field and an understanding of Early Childhood Development.

The Mississippi State Department of Health also requires that every applicant be screened for child abuse (before hiring) and finger printed.

How Parents Can Help

- Read this handbook carefully to help you understand the policies.
- Schedule and attend conferences during the year with your child's teacher.

- See that your child gets a good night's sleep each night.
- Ensure your child has regular eating habits.
- Establish a good and stress-free morning routine.
- Ensure your child arrives at the proper time.
- Show interest and ask your child about their day at school.
- Appreciate all your child's early artistic attempts. (Remember it is better to say, "Tell me about it!" rather than, "What is it?")
- Let your child be sure of your love and understanding.
- Talk with your child about DominiCare prior to bringing them and let them know it is a fun, safe and important place. Your child may sense your apprehension about leaving them behind and may be apprehensive about staying.
- Send a change of clothes in a labeled Ziploc bag to be left at the center.
- Please file any concerns immediately with the director or assistant director. We aim to address any problems quickly and in a professional manner. Unfortunately, we cannot act on hearsay or third party information alone.

General information/Policies

Hours of operation: 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday (\$40 late fee will be added for pick up).

Holiday Closings

New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas

Tuition

Rates are determined by age. Tuition for St. Dominic's employees is automatically deducted from your check. Parents who are not employed at St. Dominic's will receive an invoice bi-weekly or on a monthly basis. Non-St. Dominic's parents also have the option of auto draft payments. Returned checks will be accessed \$40 for non-sufficient funds. Late fees will also incur a \$40 fee.

Registration Fee

This fee is required upon admission to DominiCare and annually thereafter. Notification will be given when this is due.

Lost Items

DominiCare is not responsible for loss of personal items such as toys, games, etc.

Types of Services

DominiCare only offers full time care; full time is considered five days a week. **Parents are welcome to still bring their child when they are off work; however, all children must be brought in before 10 a.m. No drop in after 10 a.m. without a doctor's note. No drop in after 12 p.m. regardless of the situation.**

* The maximum time a child can be enrolled in DominiCare is 40 hours a week (Mississippi Department of Health regulation).

Open Door Policy

Parents are welcome to visit your child during times that do not disturb the class. Other authorized people on the pick-up list are not allowed to visit.

Admission Requirements

- To be enrolled and guaranteed a place at DominiCare, a child must attend on a regular basis.
- An application form must be completed, signed and turned into the Director's office.
- A 121 form (Immunization Compliance Form) must be completed. This form may be obtained from the Mississippi State Department of Health or your child's doctor and must be filled out completely with the proper signatures and dates. Immunizations must be turned to the Director when your child receives them. This information is needed for the Health Department as part of the licensing regulations. If a record is not updated, you will be asked to withdraw your child from the center until this form is in compliance and up to date.
- The Mississippi State Department of Health requires that DominiCare file a statement acknowledging that you have read and understood all policies of the center and that you have received a copy of the Health Department's Child Regulation Summary for parents.

Health

We depend on parents to help us maintain a policy that will ensure the good health of the children. If a child is sick, he or she should remain at home.

Exclusion Criteria: Small children can become ill very quickly. The childcare provider will observe each child's health throughout the time your child is in their care. If the childcare provider observes signs and symptoms of illness that would require removal from the facility, she will contact the parents/guardians to have the child picked up.

Symptoms that are cause for keeping your child at home are as followed:

- **Any contagious disease**
- **Cold**
- **Pink eye**
- **Sore throat**
- **Headache**
- **Labored or rapid breathing**
- **Vomiting**
- **Dizziness**
- **Nausea**
- **Inflamed or discharging eyes**
- **Untreated skin infection**
- **Flushed skin (unexplained rashes)**
- **Diarrhea**

Fever: defined as 100 degrees or higher (Axillary – armpit). **Children are not allowed back into the center until they have been free of fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.**

Diarrhea: frequent (three or more episodes) runny, watery or bloody stool. According to the Center for Disease Control recommendations, a child who is not toilet trained and has diarrhea should be excluded from the child care center, regardless of the cause. **Children are not to return to DominiCare until they are symptom free for 24 hours.**

Vomiting: two or more times in a 24 hour period. **Children are not to return to the center until they are symptom free for 24 hours.**

*** Doctor's statements stating that the child can return before 24 hours will not be accepted.**

Should your child have a contagious disease such as chicken pox, RSV, strep, etc. please inform the center so that the other parents can be notified. It is necessary to have a doctor's certificate stating that it is okay for the child to return to the center.

Because of the dangers of handling fecal matter, we cannot accept cloth diapers. Therefore, please plan to bring enough disposable diapers for each day.

Medication

Health Department regulations state, "Medication may only be administered to a child when written instructions from parents are given each day the child is to receive the medication." Medication Forms are in each classroom. Each dose must be premeasured and labeled by the parent, so if more than one dose will be required in a given day, each individual dose should be in a sealed container, labeled with both the child's name, the name of the medication and the time it is to be administered.

* Please do not bring medicine in a baby bottle.

Staff will only administer two breathing treatments per day with the Medication Form.

Confidentiality of Records

DominiCare personnel should not violate the confidential nature of a child's records. Information on a child shall be limited to DominiCare staff and the licensing agency unless the parents of the child give granted written permission for disclosure.

Dismissal

If you wish to withdraw your child from DominiCare Services, a written notice must be given to the director two weeks in advance, or customary charges will be made.

Arrival/Departure and Authorization Pickup

Each parent is required to sign their child in and out each day on a classroom roster. This is a Mississippi State Department of Health regulation. Your child will be sent home ONLY with persons known by the staff to be authorized and listed on the application form. In an emergency, we will allow a phone call from a parent authorizing someone else to pick up your child. In all cases photo identification will be required.

*** DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO WALK IN THE CENTER ALONE.** Your child must be escorted to his/her room.

It is very important that you follow these procedures each day for the following reasons:

- The teachers have no way of knowing your child has entered the building. Therefore the children would be unsupervised in the building. When the teacher sees the parent, she will know the child is here, thereby facilitating transfer of responsibility. It is also good for your child to see you make contact with their teacher.
- If someone else is picking up or dropping off your child, they must follow the same procedures to check the child in and out.

Check your child's cubby daily for any work, messages or notices from the director or your child's teacher.

Emergencies – Medical

If your child becomes seriously ill or injured while at DominiCare, you will be notified immediately. If we are unable to reach either parent, we will attempt to reach emergency contacts you designated on your application. We will call 911, and the child will be transported to the emergency room at St. Dominic's. In a life-threatening emergency, your child will be treated without verbal consent but on the basis of your written consent included in the application. It is very important that you keep all emergency contact information updated. Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation if required.

Emergency Relocation Sites

In the event that we would need to evacuate the building and relocate to another site, the designated sites are:

1. Dominican Plaza on St. Dominic's North Campus
2. St. Catherine's Village, St. Dominic's retirement community in Madison County

Transportation Policy

DominiCare does not transport children for field trips.

Water Safety Policy

DominiCare does not have a wading pool.

Clothing

Bring a change of clothes for your child regardless of their age in case of an accident or spill. Be sure that your child's clothing is comfortable, washable and age appropriate. Children's clothing should be appropriate for all arts and outside play.

Kitchen

The kitchen is used by the staff only. Parents and children are not allowed in the kitchen (the only time parents are allowed in the kitchen is to store medication in the fridge if required and to pick up). Taking food/snacks/juice from the pantry is not allowed. Your child will be given a snack at appropriate times throughout the day.

Suspected Child Abuse

DominiCare is responsible legally and morally to report suspected child abuse to the Department of Human Services.

Biting Policy

Why do children bite? Some toddlers develop a regular habit of biting their peers. Watching children at this age and stage, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that their attacks are designed to get attention. Those who bite often have known the children that they like the most. Naturally, this method of intimidating play is unacceptable, and it can be very embarrassing for the parents of the biters. Nevertheless, such behavior is not unusual in this age group.

Biting is often resorted to in moments of extreme frustration, for example when a child is tired or hungry. Children at this age do not yet have the vocabulary to express these feelings.

What will the caregiver do if a child bites? First aid will be administered to the child that is bitten. Your signature on the application will give the center permission to administer first aid, which includes cleaning the bite with soap and water and applying antibiotic ointment.

Communication to parents – parents will be notified with a phone call and a note in the child’s cubby when your child is bitten or if your child is the biter in the incident. An incident form will be filled out for both parties.

Techniques used to prevent biting – When a child bites, the caregiver will react disapprovingly towards the act, not the child. The caregiver may say, “Biting hurts very much” or “Biting is not nice.”

During the time when a caregiver must attend to another child and cannot intervene, a child who bites often will be placed at the toddler’s table or bed. This protects the other children, but does not punish the child. For an older child who bites, when a caregiver is not in the position to intervene, the child will be a “shadow” (standing or sitting near the caregiver) until she is in a mobile position.

What will be done concerning biting? Biting is an emotional issue with caregivers and parents. We all need each other’s support and assurance that this stage in your child’s life will soon pass.

Each case is different, but there may be a time when the director must decide that a biting child cannot remain at DominiCare. In addition, a biting child causes so much stress among the caregiver and parents, while causing fear among the children. In these situations, permanent removal is necessary.

Discipline Policy

What we believe:

- Children learn best through experience. Teachers must encourage and enhance their growth and development while in our care.
- Classroom rules must be consistent so that the children will know what is expected of them.

We believe we can accomplish this by:

- Developing center/classroom rules with the help of the children so that they are actively involved and understand what is expected of them.
- Providing a variety of activities that are developmentally appropriate for each child.
- Utilizing group management techniques such as limiting the number of children to areas if needed, allowing for sufficient material and providing opportunity for constructive interaction.
- Speaking positively with a child if their behavior is inappropriate for the area or materials that they are using (e.g. “We take the blocks down like this,” or “We walk inside, you may run when we go outside.”)
- Praising children when their behavior is appropriate, such as, “You remembered to walk inside.”
- Redirecting children to another area if they are having difficulties in one area.
- If, after using the above techniques, a child is continually having difficulty cooperating the child will be removed from the activity or play area for a thinking time (time out). This allows a child to think about their action.
- Repeated trips to “time out” in a given time period would indicate to the teacher that an informal parent conference is needed to seek assistance in working with the child.
- Children with consistent difficulties are taken through the above procedures, and the parents are notified regularly. If necessary, for serious behaviors, outside assistance is sought.
- Ultimately, the child could be dismissed from DominiCare. This is seriously considered when the health, safety and welfare of the child, and/or other children and staff are at risk.
- DominiCare also reserves the right to dismiss a child from the center if, in the opinion of the director, a parent or other family member is harassing, threatening, intimidating or exhibiting other inappropriate behavior to DominiCare staff.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS NOT ALLOWED AT DOMINICARE

Birthday Parties

A birthday is a very special day in the life of a child. We want that day to be extra special; therefore we invite you to celebrate in the following ways:

- You may supply special refreshments, cupcakes, cookies, birthday cake, ice cream or whatever you like.
- Please discuss your plans with your child's teacher in advance.

Holiday Parties

Check with your child's teacher for a calendar of events. Some teachers will ask parents to volunteer as a room parent to help coordinate the event.

Clothing/Outdoor Play

Mississippi State Department of Health regulations states that children should be taken outdoors for a minimum of two hours each day, weather permitting. In accordance with these regulations, we spend some time outdoors each day except when it's too cold, too hot or it's raining. Brief outside play, even in cold weather, has been proven to reduce the risk of upper respiratory illness. The American Medical Association (AMA) agrees that young children benefit from outdoor play in cold weather.

- Please see that your child has adequate clothing for cold weather. Dressing in layers is a good idea during transitional weather.
- Outdoor play is an important part of your child's play at DominiCare. It allows for the development of large motor skills, social skills and cognitive thinking skills. We suggest that your child wears comfortable, washable clothing that can be easily managed.
- Parents are requested to bring an extra change of clothing, including socks and underwear, to leave in your child's classroom (all ages).
- We also suggest for safety purposes that your child wear sneakers or sport style sandals. Although popular, slide and thongs style sandals and platform soled shoes are not appropriate for outside play. These types of shoes will not allow the child to run, etc. in a safe manner.

All children are expected to go outside each day. The only exception is extreme weather conditions. Send your child dressed appropriately for outside play.

If you do not want your child to go outside, you must make other arrangements to keep them home.

Toys

DominiCare provides age appropriate toys, games and equipment for play activities.

- Children should NOT bring toys from home (unless for a special event, such as show and tell).
- We welcome children to bring books to correspond with units of study. Nature items are always welcome. Children may be requested to bring special items from home that relate to units of study.

Diapering Policy

Steps for diapering will include:

- Each child's diaper is changed when wet or soiled.
- Caregivers wash their hands with liquid soap and water using friction and dry hands with a paper towel before picking up the infant.
- The child is placed on their back on the changing table, which has been covered with a paper towel, ensuring that the child does not come in contact with the changing surface.
- Caregiver puts on latex gloves prior to removing the diaper.
- The dirty diaper and all cleaning cloths, including the latex gloves, are placed in a plastic bag, which is tied and deposited in the garbage can.
- The child's bottom and genital areas are cleaned with diaper wipes or wet paper towels. All cleaning materials are placed in the garbage can.
- Diaper cream is placed on the bottom and genital area.
- A clean diaper is secured on the child and clothing is replaced. The child's hands are washed and then dried with a paper towel.
- The child is returned to the play area.
- Wet or dirty clothing is placed in a plastic bag and put in the child's bag or cubby.
- The paper is removed and discarded in the adjacent garbage can. The caregiver then washes their hands with liquid soap and hot water, careful not to touch the faucet handles with their hands.
- The caregiver sterilizes the changing table with a Clorox solution. The spray is placed back in the cabinet, which has a child safety lock administered.
- The times of all diaper changes are charted on the daily report.
- The changing table will not be used for any other activities.

Infant Care

Each child will be provided their own crib for sleeping. Young infants are held while being fed. Teachers send home a daily report informing the parents of feeding, diapering, sleeping and other routine events of the child's day.

The child's physical needs (feeding, diapering and sleeping) and emotional needs (holding, cuddling and talking) are our top priorities. We offer a quality enrichment program. To provide infants with stimulation, caregivers spend time each day on the floor with developmentally appropriate toys, and time is spent reading and singing songs to them throughout the day. Crib mobiles are also provided for stimulation.

- Primary Caregiver – we believe that in order to build trust, a child needs consistency in their daily care. For that reason, we assign each child a primary caregiver. Part time staff will fill in as needed for vacation, sick, etc.
- Feeding – parents provide formula, bottles (labeled) and baby food for their child. You are responsible for communicating your child's dietary transitions to their primary caregiver. As the child makes the transition to table food, St. Dominic's Nutrition and Food Services prepares appropriate food. No outside food is allowed in the center (regulations of the Health Department). The menu is posted in each classroom. Bibs are provided by parents. Bring the necessary bottles already made up and all food properly labeled, with written instructions concerning feeding (infant feeding schedule). No glass bottles should be brought to the center.
- State law requires that we accept no previously opened jars of food.
- Sleeping – we provide clean sheets for your child. For safety concerns, no other objects (including blankets and pillows) are allowed in the crib.

* You are welcome to bring your child their own equipment (Exersaucers, bouncer/vibrating chair, etc.) for their personal use. Check with your child's teacher before bringing any items.

Breastfeeding

DominiCare supports breastfeeding moms; we have a comfortable, private room for breastfeeding mothers.

Toddler Care

Toddler rooms are equipped with materials that enhance language development, opportunities to use gross motor skills, and allow for children to use self-help skills. Classroom curriculum is based upon developmental abilities as well as birthdate.

Caregivers guide the children in a variety of activities that begin to introduce the curriculum areas of art, language arts, science, math, dramatic play, gross motor skills fine motor skills, manipulatives, blocks and outdoor play.

Each week, the teacher prepares a lesson plan that is age appropriate. A daily schedule and a monthly calendar are posted outside each classroom.

Feeding – The menu is posted in each classroom. Children sit at the table for breakfast, morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack.

- We serve breakfast from 6:45 to 7:15 a.m. If arriving after serving time, please serve your child breakfast before coming to the center. No outside food is allowed in the center. This is a regulation of the Health Department.
- “Sippy cups” are provided by parents and are labeled with the child’s name. These cups are to be taken home daily to be washed and then returned.
- Please be sure that both the director and teacher know about any food allergies your child has, as well as other allergies. This will be communicated to all staff.
- Sleeping – all sleeping mats must be waterproof. Older toddlers sleep on a mat (which parents provide). Security and familiar items are important during transition periods. As time progresses and the child adjust, these items are placed in the child’s cubby and reserved for nap time if needed.

Toilet Training

We recognize that each child is an individual. Children are ready for toilet training at different ages and stages. We will begin training when the parent and teacher feel the child is ready. We recognize the following physical and emotional signs for readiness. A child may be ready for toilet training when they:

- Remain dry for at least two hours at a time during the day or are dry after nap.
- Have predictable and regular bowel movements.
- Indicate by words, facial expressions or posture that they are about to urinate or have a bowel movement.
- Can pull pants on and off with little help.
- Display discomfort with soiled diapers and want to be changed.
- Ask to wear underwear.
- Are able to follow simple and verbal instructions.

Preschool

We recognize the importance of learning. The preschool curriculum is based on the developmental theory that play promotes the child’s cognitive, social, emotional, physical and creative development. Activities are centered on a “theme” and provide the child with positive

experiences through the use of developmentally appropriate materials. The environment is created so that each child can make choices, initiate play and feel success without pressure.

Children develop an enthusiasm for learning, exploring and creativity through the use of constructive play activities in these areas: art, language arts, music, science, manipulative, large motor skills, fine motor skills, math and dramatic play. Children are given the opportunity to become responsible and independent through self-directed and individualized activities. These activities also foster creativity, allowing for self-expression and self-discovery. Learning is both formal and informal. Listening is balanced with talking, action with reflection, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, and quiet play with noisy activities. PLAY is a child's job!

Preschool children should place all personal items in their cubby upon arriving to the center.

- Physical play – in physical or sensorimotor play, the emphasis is on action. Children love to run and move about. Children need a large amount of time playing physical games devoted to movement and large motor activities.
- Manipulative play – as soon as infants are able to reach out and grasp, manipulative play is evident. In part, manipulative play is a means of providing stimulation. Children enjoy making things happen.
- Symbolic play – this type of play involves the manipulation, not of people or things, but of reality itself; this includes make believe, pretend, and fantasy play as well as nonsense rhymes or other forms of speech play. The settings, events, identities of objects, or people, even attitude and emotions, can be altered for the sake of pretend play.

Babysitting

Families occasionally need additional childcare and may choose to ask staff members to provide babysitting services during off-duty hours, outside of the childcare center. St. Dominic Hospital is in no way involved in such arrangements and bears no responsibility or liability for any damages resulting from private engagements.

Just Playing
by Anita Wadley

When I'm building in the block room, please don't say I'm "Just Playing".
For you see, I'm learning as I play, about balance and shapes.
Who knows, I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up, setting the table, caring for the babies,
don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing". For, you see I'm learning as I play;
I may be a mother or a father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint or standing at an easel, or molding
and shaping clay, Please don't let me hear you say, "He is Just Playing".
For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm expressing myself and being creative.
I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair "reading" to an imaginary audience,
Please don't laugh and think I'm "Just Playing".
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs, or packing my pockets with choice
things I find, don't pass it off as "Just Play".
For you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a scientist someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some "plaything" at my school,
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "Play".
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.
I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods,
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "Just Play".
I'm learning to follow direction and see differences.
I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run and move my body,
please don't say I'm "Just Playing".
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning how my body works.
I may be a doctor, nurse or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today, and I say, "I Just Played",
Please don't misunderstand me. For you see, I'm learning as I play.

I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work. I'm preparing for tomorrow.
Today, I am a child and my work is play.

Notes



Notes



St. Dominic's