

*The Little Tree Play School
Parent Handbook*



2011-2012

Table of Contents

Welcome

Philosophy

Goals

Admission Policies

Rights of the Licensing Agency

Curriculum

School Hours

Daily Schedule

Communication

Administration

General Information

Arrival and Greeting

Signing In and Out

Separation Difficulties

Guidance Policy

Dismissal

Snack

Reporting Absences

Health Policies

Medications

First Aid

Clothing

Sleep

The Friends Basket

Laundry

Birthday Celebrations

Seasonal Celebrations

Tuition Billing

Change of Enrollment Status

Emergency and Disaster Information

Welcome

Dear Parents,

We are so happy that you have chosen The Little Tree Play School to share these precious beginning years at school with you and your child. We recognize the great responsibility that we have in introducing the young child to school life and we will always do our very best to ensure that your child is safe, happy and thriving.

This handbook has been written to provide you with general information about our program and administrative policies. If there are questions or concerns that are not answered here, please feel free to give me a call.

Warmly,

*Cynthia A. Silva
Director/Teacher
The Little Tree Play School
New Creation Lutheran Church*

Philosophy

The Little Tree Play School philosophy is one that respects and reveres the uniqueness of each child. It also supports the belief that the young child's success in the world is directly related to his or her self-esteem and sense of security about the world. Our program strives to promote a safe and nurturing environment that is age-appropriate through a curriculum that stimulates the whole child in all areas of development. We believe that a flexible play-based program provides children of all learning styles the opportunity to cultivate a natural sense of wonder and an enthusiasm for learning.

Development of Self-Confidence and Self Esteem

- *Positive self image*
- *Trust*
- *Ability to make choices*
- *Initiative*
- *Creative Expression*
- *Willingness to try new things*
- *Confidence in expressing needs, feelings and ideas*

Development of the Whole Child

- *Social Skills*
- *Emotional Skills*
- *Language Development*
- *Communication Skills*
- *Physical Skills*
- *Cognitive Skills*
- *Creativity*

Development of Social/Emotional Skills

- *Problem solving and conflict resolution*
- *Cooperative play*
- *Developing trust in peers and adults*
- *Belonging to a group, participating in a group*
- *Being a leader and a follower*
- *Expressing feelings*
- *Developing listening skills*
- *Making friends, being a friend*

Goals

- *To maintain a safe, nurturing, supportive and stimulating environment for the development of the young child*
- *To facilitate learning through play*
- *To model empathy and compassion for others*
- *To recognize the uniqueness of each individual child and celebrate our differences*
- *To create a trusting, predictable environment*
- *To provide flexibility within the curriculum for children to initiate learning experiences*
- *To emphasize the process of learning without focusing so much on the end product*
- *To use positive language with the children*
- *To encourage the children to try new things*
- *To provide choices for children*
- *To continue to develop and revise curriculum to meet individual needs*

Admission Policies and Procedures

Applications for enrollment are accepted without regard to race, color, religion, creed, sexual orientation, gender or national origin. All children, including those presently enrolled must reapply each school year (the school year runs from September through June, with a separate Summer Camp program in July).

Church membership is not required for enrollment. Preschool families are always invited to attend church services and events. Baptism is offered to all children attending The Little Tree Play School and church attendance is not required for baptism. If you would like more information on New Creation Lutheran Church please visit www.newcreationchurch-sj.org

Our school program is designed to meet the needs of children who are 2.5 years old by their first day of school through their age upon entrance to Kindergarten.

Admission is determined by space availability and the ability of our staff and curriculum to meet each child's individual needs. A discussion between the center director and the parent/guardian followed by a visit with the child to the school and the completion of the enrollment packet and payment of tuition/enrollment fees shall determine admission of a child into school. A child's enrollment can be terminated, with or without cause, at any time at the discretion of The Little Tree Play School. Please see the "Tuition and Billing" section of this handbook for a list of current prices.

Rights of the Licensing Agency

The Department of Social Services has the authority to interview children or staff without prior consent. The Department of Social Services also has the authority to inspect, audit, and copy child or child care center records upon demand during normal business hours.

Curriculum

- *Pre-reading*
- *Pre-writing*
- *Gardening*
- *Cooking*
- *Art*
- *Music*
- *Outdoor play*
- *Small motor skill development*
- *Large motor skill development*
- *Dramatic play*
- *Construction/Block Play*
- *Small group activities*
- *Large group activities*

School Hours

The Little Tree Play School's hours of operation are as follows:

Monday through Friday

8:00AM to 4:00PM

We follow the calendar of the Oak Grove School District, which includes breaks for Thanksgiving, as well as 2 weeks in December, a week in February and a week in April. The school year ends in late June and we provide a separate Summer Camp program. Please see the enclosed schedule for a list of all holidays, breaks and in-service days.

Daily Schedule

9:00AM (Classroom)

Arrival

Indoor Free Play

Table Activity

Clean up

Circle Time

10:00AM (Playground)

Outdoor Free Play

Gardening Activity

Bathroom Break / Washing Hands

11:00AM (Fellowship Room)

Morning Snack

Clean Up

Group Project (Art, Music, Science or Cooking)

12:00PM Parent Pick Up

Communication

Near the door will be the location for the sign-in clipboard, flyers for upcoming events, the lost and found and our Communications notebook. The Communications notebook is a place where you can make entries about anything you like pertaining to the children, the program, notes to teachers, etc. Please do not put anything in the notebook that you want to keep private as this notebook will be open for everyone to read. Matters that you would like to keep private can be discussed in person with the director or teachers. The notebook will be checked each day and responses will be added to the notebook unless a personal call or in-person conversation is more appropriate.

Because the children are a high priority, please keep conversations with the teacher to a minimum upon drop off and pick up. Please help to keep transitions into school successful for the children by taking personal conversations outside the classroom.

Please do be sure to relate any time sensitive information directly to the teachers at drop off and pick up and use the notebook for matters that are not urgent.

There will be three parent meetings; one in the fall, one in mid-year and one in the spring. Your questions and suggestions for topics at our parent meetings will be an important element to these meetings.

Scheduled parent/teacher conferences will be held twice a year with each family. At any time during the course of the year, conferences can be scheduled at the request of the parents or the teachers. Also, we are always available to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Feel free to call any time after school hours for discussion.

Administration

Mailing Address:

*7275 Santa Teresa Blvd.
San Jose, CA 95139*

The Little Tree Play School

Director/Teacher Cynthia Silva

Phone: 408.972-9200 x2

Email:

New Creation Church

Phone: 408.972.9200

Pastor Anne Carlson

The Little Tree Play School Board of Directors

Loretta Esparza

Rick Voss

Jim Carlson

General Information

Arrival and Greeting

Arrival time for Breakfast Club is from 8:00AM – 8:45AM. Teachers will be preparing for breakfast club before 8:00 AM and will unlock/open the main entrance to the church at 8:00 AM. Children arriving after 8:45 AM will not have an opportunity to eat breakfast, as we are cleaning up by that time. Please visit your child's cubby to drop off personal items

Arrival time for the classroom is 9:00AM. Please assist your child to the bathroom before entering if necessary. Children should place their hats, coats on hooks and and change from their outside shoes into their inside slippers. If bringing a "friend" or blanket from home, please place it in the Friends Basket located near the cubbies.

Pick Up Time

Children should be picked up promptly at your child's pick up time. Pick up is outside, in front of the church, by the benches nearest to the classroom. Feel free to stay on the grounds and visit. Please be aware that the teachers are no longer responsible for your children once you have arrived and signed out. Excessive late pickups will result in a late pick up fee of one dollar per minute after 12:30pm.

Signing In and Out

Parents are required by law to sign children in and out each day. Please help us keep our records accurate by signing in and out each day. Please write your signature next to your child's name, the time of arrival and then later, the time of departure from school.

If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, please let us know in the morning. You may authorize an adult other than a parent to pick up your child by having his or her name, address and phone number on file in the office. If we do not have an authorization form for you, we are not permitted by law to release your child to another adult. Please also inform any authorized adult who may be coming that ID is checked upon pick up.

Separation Difficulties

Young children who are first entering school may have some difficulty transitioning at arrival time. Due to the uniqueness of each individual child and his or her needs, we will work together to find the best way to help them transition. If after trying many different transitioning strategies a child is still having much difficulty transitioning into school life, the teacher will recommend that the child wait a bit longer before starting school and enroll at a later date.

Guidance Policy

A spirit of nurturing and cooperation is the goal for the general nature of the classroom. This cooperative spirit, paired with the age appropriateness of our program will naturally foster a generally cooperative environment.

If a child is in danger of hurting him or herself or someone else, the child will be redirected. Generally this is done by simply moving the child to another activity or engaging the child in another conversation.

Teachers will continue to model empathy, compassion, problem solving and positive language and will help the children make choices in the spirit of cooperation.

A child who is entirely frustrated may be encouraged to “have a rest” or sit with a book for a bit until the child decides he or she is ready to again join the group.

At no time and under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used at our school. Employees who act in this or other unacceptable ways may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Snack Menu

Snacks will be provided each day by the school. If a child has an allergy or food preference outside of our menu, please feel free to bring substitute items to be stored in the kitchen cabinets or in the refrigerator.

Bread will be baked with the children in the fall and winter months and pita or crackers will be served in spring. Seasonal fruits and vegetables will be served along with cheese, boiled eggs and almond butter. Other various baking and cooking activities will take place with the children and dishes created at school will be incorporated into our snack menu.

Reporting Absences

*Attendance is taken daily in the classroom. If your child is absent please notify the teacher by leaving a voice mail message on the school phone. **408-972-9200 x.2** Messages will be checked daily.*

Health Policies

State law requires that each child has an updated immunization record on file at school. We need to be aware of any physically limiting or potentially life threatening conditions which may cause your child harm.

If your child has any of the following symptoms he or she should not be sent to school:

- *Diarrhea*
- *Severe cough*
- *Difficult or rapid breathing*
- *Yellowish skin or eyes*
- *Pink eye*
- *Unusual spots or rashes*
- *Sore throat or trouble swallowing*
- *Infected skin*
- *Yellow runny nose*
- *Unusually colored urine or stool*
- *Headache and stiff neck*
- *Vomiting*
- *Loss of appetite*
- *Severe itching of body or scalp*
- *Fever over 99 degrees*

Please keep your child home for at least 24 hours after either vomiting or having a fever, and report all communicable diseases to the school. Also, please report any case of head lice as quickly as possible. Students who have been exposed to a communicable disease will receive an “exposure notice” which explains the symptoms of the disease and the requirements to return to school.

If your child develops any of these symptoms at school you will be notified as soon as possible and he or she will need to be picked up promptly.

Medications

*Whenever possible, medication should be given at home before and after school providing this meets a physician’s recommendation. **This includes application of sunscreen!***

Medication that must be administered at school should be brought to school by an adult and not handled or transported by the child or in a child’s bag or backpack. Any child who is regularly receiving medication should have the medication noted on the child’s emergency card and emergency form which should be updated as needed.

Any child who is required to take prescribed medication during the school day may be assisted by school personnel if the school has received and has on file a written statement from the physician detailing the method, amount and time scheduled by which such medication is to be taken and a written statement from the parent or guardian of the child indicating the desire for the school to assist the child in following the physician’s statement.

The medication must be in the original prescription container with the pharmacy label including the date dispensed, physician’s name, child’s name, medication and instructions for administering the medication.

First Aid

The school is equipped to handle all minor ailments and injuries. Parents will be notified and asked to come for a child if the child exhibits any of the following:

- *Injury requiring further treatment or observation*
- *Temperature above normal*
- *Nausea or vomiting*
- *Severe headache*
- *Evidence of a communicable disease*

In the event of a health emergency the following procedure will be followed:

1. *Parents will be notified. If they are not available, the person listed as an emergency contact in the child's file is notified.*
2. *If no emergency contact can be located and the child needs further emergency care, the child will be taken to your family doctor or hospital in the company of a school employee when possible. If this is not possible, the San Jose Fire Department paramedics will be called.*
3. *The San Jose Fire Department paramedics will be called in the event of a major emergency.*

Clothing

Comfortable, sturdy play clothes in natural breathable fabrics are the best choice for school clothes. In the interest of having the children be fully engaged in their play, it is important that they wear clothing that keep them comfortable and can get dirty, wet, painted on, etc., without worry.

Your child will need a complete change of clothing in their cubby at all times. If a child takes home a wet or dirty change of clothing, please remember to bring another set the following day that your child attends school. Feel free to leave more than one change of clothing in your child's cubby if you like.

Your child will also need a pair of comfortable slippers with non-slip soles to wear in school.

A comfortable hat with a brim will be needed during the warmer months and a warm cozy hat will be needed during the colder months for outdoor play.

Please dress your child appropriately for warm and cold weather. Layered clothing is recommended during winter months as we can pile on and peel off layers as we go outside and inside for our play.

Unless the weather is unusually uncomfortable, we will be venturing outside in all kinds of weather. It is important that on rainy days, the children have a raincoat, rain pants, a rain hat and rain boots during the rainy season. Rainy day play is a treat at The Little

Tree Play School.

Sleep

School life is filled with lots of activity, social interactions, and play time. The young child is also expending a lot of energy growing physically and needs plenty of sleep to feel well rested. In order to help your child enjoy the richness of school life, please help them to get enough sleep.

The Friends Basket

Sometimes children need to bring a buddy to school. The Friends Basket is a place where a child can keep his or her buddy close by and in the classroom with them while they play at school. If a child wants to take the friend from the basket to play with it and it becomes difficult to share, it will be returned to the Friends Basket or the child can choose to play with it alone. Children are not required to share the Friends they bring to school for comfort, though it is encouraged.

Laundry

In an attempt to be earth-friendly, we use cloth napkins, towels and washcloths whenever possible. We ask that each family participate in taking home the laundry basket each Friday in order to help us keep up with the ongoing laundry that the classroom activities produce. Taking home the laundry and doing it with your child is a nice way to share in community care and it strengthens the child's connection to school as he or she begins to see himself or herself as an important contributing member of the community.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated at school with a special song and story. The birthday child will receive handmade cards from the teacher and the children in the class and a handmade paper crown. The celebration will take place during the last 15 minutes of the day. Family members of the birthday child are encouraged to attend! Parents may bring treats if they choose, to be eaten after school at the discretion of each child's parent.

Seasonal Celebrations

The following is a list of our seasonal celebrations that take place throughout the year. We encourage families to also share their own cultural or religious traditions with us so that we can incorporate them into the calendar and share each unique tradition with one another. Please see our School Calendar for this year's dates.

Grandparents' Soup Day

This is a day when we make and serve soup and cornbread and have our Grandparents come to honor them and show appreciation.

Halloween Celebration

This day at school is for pumpkin carving and making treat bags, sharing age-appropriate stories and songs about Halloween and our costume parade.

Martinmas Lantern Walk

This is our only celebration that is scheduled for the evening. Just before dark we will gather in the garden for a picnic in the grass. At dark, we will light our lanterns that the children have made and take a short walk in the nearby neighborhood singing songs about light. Children attending must have one adult attend with them.

Wreath- Making Day

This is a day when parents are encouraged to join us in the kitchen for hot cider, desserts and wreath making with the children.

Christmas Celebration

On this day we will celebrate the Christmas season by decorating our tree with lights and with ornaments made by the children. We welcome the sharing of other holidays in the classroom on this day by asking families with other traditions to bring something to share such as a menorah, a song, or a traditional food representative of that family's tradition.

Pajama Day

This is a day when we celebrate literacy. We come in our p.j.'s and read books, tell stories, write stories and take a day to generally enjoy the written and spoken word.

Friendship Day

In relation to Valentine's Day, each child is asked to work with a parent at home to hand make Valentine's for each child in the classroom. Valentine boxes will be decorated and ready for the passing out of Valentine's cards.

May Day Celebration

This celebration is in relation to the welcoming of spring. We will make May flower baskets and dance the May pole in the garden.

Parent Appreciation Day

In appreciation for our parents, we invite them to come for a special celebration put on by the children on this day.

Tuition and Billing

Breakfast Club (8:00 – 9:00 a.m.)

5 Mornings per week	\$65/month
3 Mornings per week	\$45/month
2 Mornings per week	\$30/month

Mornings Only

Tuition:

5 days \$550 per month

Monday to Thursday

9:00AM to 12:00PM

Classroom Supply Fee: \$75.00 per year

Tuition Deposit: \$150.00 (one-time fee)

Tuition:

3 days \$360 per month

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

9:00AM to 12:00PM

Classroom Supply Fee: \$75.00 per year

Tuition Deposit: \$150.00 (one-time fee)

Tuition:

2 days \$240 per month

Monday, Wednesday Option

Tuesday, Thursday Option

9:00AM to 12:00PM

Classroom Supply Fee: \$75.00 per year

Tuition Deposit: \$150.00 (one-time fee)

Full Day (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

Tuition:

5 days \$925 per month

Monday to Friday

8:00AM to 4:00PM

Classroom Supply Fee: \$75.00 per year

Tuition Deposit: \$150.00 (one-time fee)

Tuition:

3 days \$600 per month

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

8:00AM to 4:00PM

Classroom Supply Fee: \$75.00 per year

Tuition Deposit: \$150.00 (one-time fee)

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Tuition:

2 days *\$425 per month*

Monday, Wednesday Option

Tuesday, Thursday Option

8:00AM to 4:00PM

Classroom Supply Fee: \$75.00 per year

Tuition Deposit: \$150.00 (one-time fee)

Payment Procedures

A tuition basket where payment can be left for tuition is located in the classroom.

Tuition deposit, the classroom supply fee and tuition for the first month of school is due before the first day a child attends school. After that, tuition is due on the first of each month. Tuition received after the 10th of the month will result in a late fee of \$25.00.

Change of Enrollment Status

Enrollment in the program is for one school year. In February of each school year, a letter will be sent asking parents if they would like to enroll again for the following year.

If it becomes necessary for you to withdraw your child at any time, a 30 day notice is required. *Should you need to withdraw your child before the end of the school year, tuition after the 30 days will be forgiven and there will be no refund of your deposit.*

Emergency and Disaster Information

In the event of an emergency or disaster where the church building does not need to be evacuated, parents or persons listed as emergency contacts will be contacted and the children will be supervised and cared for until they are reunited with their parents.

In the event of an emergency where the building must be evacuated, the children will be escorted outside and onto the north most part of the parking lot. Parents or persons listed as emergency contacts will be contacted and the children will be supervised and cared for until they are reunited with their parents.