

Tree of Life Children's Center at Temple Beth Israel

FAMILY HANDBOOK



**Tree of Life
Children's Center**
at Temple Beth Israel

Nurturing children and helping them thrive

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ABOUT US

WELCOME

Shalom! The aim of our program is to provide a nurturing environment that will support children in their effort to establish self-identity, self-esteem, and a growing desire for independence within the context of the teachings of Reform Judaism. Our program is child-centered and play-immersed, and recognizes caring relationships as the foundation for a child's learning and growth.

The Tree of Life Children's Center is licensed by the State of California Department of Social Services, and is associated with the Bureau of Jewish Education.

MISSION STATEMENT

We endeavor to embody in daily practice our mission statement: *"Temple Beth Israel is a warm, inclusive community, creating lives of meaning and striving to bring healing to the world."*

OUR PHILOSOPHY

- Children learn best when they are actively engaged in their daily experiences with materials and people in a safe, loving and nurturing environment.
- All children are unique individuals and deserve respect as a child and as a person.
- Children develop and learn according to their own maturity level in the areas of Language Development, Social-Emotional Development, Cognition, and Motor Skills. Setting an environment with activities that are developmentally appropriate is key to promoting learning that challenges children.
- We model positive guidance to guide children to control their behavior. These intervention strategies teach children to work out conflicts on their own rather

than solely relying on teachers. Staff are proactive by arranging the learning environment and foresee possible conflicts, rather than react to situations.

- We provide a Jewish early learning context for those families who identify as Jewish, and an opportunity for others to learn about Judaism and share in new traditions with friends in a warm and welcoming community. All children should be able to relate to and be proud of their own culture, as well as respect and relate to other cultures around them.

CURRICULUM

At the Tree of Life Children's Center, we strive for a balance. The balance is between outdoor and indoor activities, a balance between teacher-guided and child-initiated play, a balance of Jewish and secular learning and a balance of opportunities for independent play and social interaction. The integration of Judaism into our early childhood program makes Shabbat a highlight of our school week and creates the understanding of mitzvot (good and kind deeds), among other early Jewish experiences.

Exploring, discovery and learning are promoted within all of our age groups. Children move from one class to the next at the beginning of fall, and the focus of each group reflects the children's developmental stages and increasing skill levels. Our teachers understand the importance of interacting with each child in a meaningful way to support and extend their learning. We view the curriculum through a "whole child" lens, meaning everything the children do throughout the day *is* curriculum, and a learning opportunity. Personal care routines, eating snack and having a conversation with friends, participating in Shabbat on Friday mornings, tending a garden together – such things as these are rich in learning equal to a story shared at group time, a small group early math activity the teacher is facilitating, or an open-ended creative art experience the children explore.

Another important aspect of our program is embracing Jewish values and the belief in instilling good character traits in children. Working together, we (teachers and families) can nurture children's positive development founded on Jewish values. Our children's center has for many years incorporated a program into our curriculum called *Mussar* for children. This program integrates a new Jewish value, *middah*, into the classroom curriculum each month. The *middot* (values) that we focus on are forgiveness, patience, trust, friendship, silence, responsibility, courage, generosity and loving-kindness. We additionally discuss the values of *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world, and *Kehillah*, community. The *Middah* each month is not a one-time activity, but integrated into our conversations and activities holistically. These values complement other learning activities by supporting and promoting social-emotional development.

The teachers plan and post in the classrooms a lesson plan for every two weeks. It features a focus story with open-ended questions for discussion and new vocabulary words, and the array of other learning domains. Each domain area is outlined with highlighted materials and specific experiences planned. Teachers articulate a learning goal for the activities on each lesson plan using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), and observe the children's engagement and interests to inform future planning.

Each Fall and Spring we hold parent-teacher conferences where the children's strengths and learning styles are discussed, and as a team family and teachers collaborate to form two to four learning goals for each child. Conferences are an opportunity to celebrate the ways your child has grown since joining the program, and deepen our relationship with parents so we can best support the child's and family's needs.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

REGISTRATION

Families may choose from a variety of daily schedule options, and choose to enroll for two, three or five days per week. Children are grouped according to their age on September 1st of that program year.

We traditionally have one classroom for four-year-olds that is a “TK-style” classroom, still play-immersed but more structured and focused on preparing for kindergarten. For that specific room, children must attend five days a week (half or full days), and activities begin at 9 AM sharp each morning. We have a different classroom appropriate for older three’s and four-year-olds who do not attend daily, or are coming into preschool for the first time and may not be ready, or prefer not to have, that degree of structure.

Priority registration is given to members of Temple Beth Israel, and continuing families. There is a priority enrollment period in March of each year for current families, and then registration opens to the waitlist and community at large by April 1st for the next fall. As a year-round program, families can enroll at any point in the year based on space availability. There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$125 for new families, and \$100 annually for continuing families. Once the registration form and registration fee is received, your child’s spot and class placement are confirmed. An enrollment packet of forms including the admission agreement is distributed and must be completed before the child’s first day of attendance. The packet includes a physical exam form and submitting proof of up to date immunizations, per licensing requirements. Registration packets are required to be updated annually. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to keep all information current and updated, such as change of address, emergency contacts, phone numbers, etc. throughout the year. Any updates should be emailed to the TLCC office so we always have the correct information in the event of an emergency.

FEES

Tree of Life Children's Center is a nonprofit component of Temple Beth Israel. All fees will apply to the support and improvement of the center. Tuition is paid monthly, due by the first of each month. A late charge of \$25 is applied when payments are received later than the third business day of the month. Tuition rates are set in the spring for the following fiscal year (July 1- June 30). Any changes in tuition rates during the year are atypical, but if necessary, all families will receive no less than sixty days' notice of any change in rates.

MEMBER DISCOUNT

A 10% discount is offered to families who are members in good standing of Temple Beth Israel. There is a 10% discount maximum per family.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

A 10% discount is offered to a second or additional sibling(s) enrolled in the same program year. The discount is applied to the youngest child enrolled from the family. There is a 10% discount maximum per family.

ADDITIONAL HOURS OR DAYS

Additional hours or occasional extra days of care may be available, space permitting. This extra time must be requested in advance and approved by the Director. Charges for additional time are listed on the current tuition rate sheet, and are added to the family's monthly tuition statement.

PAYMENT POLICIES

We strongly encourage families to set up automated transfer (ACH) via our childcare app for tuition payments. Checks are also accepted, but billing procedures through the childcare app are streamlined and provide prompt and accessible service for

families to manage their payments, have automatic reminders of due dates, etc. There is a \$25 fee for returned checks or non-sufficient funds, and more than two instances of such in a year is grounds for disenrollment.

Families who cannot make a payment on time should contact the Director to discuss a special circumstances arrangement. Once a special circumstances arrangement is in place, all payments outlined must be followed on schedule. In cases of special circumstances, a missed payment deadline is cause for disenrollment.

REFUND POLICY

There are no refunds made for non-participation. Absences due to illness, vacations, holidays or any other personal reasons do not result in fee credits or adjustments of any kind. When enrolling, you are paying for the space, time and staffing whether or not your child attends.

CHANGES IN SERVICES

Once enrolled, if your schedule needs change, please contact the Director. Based on space availability, change of service requests will be honored on a first come, first serve basis. A Change of Services form will be completed to update your admission agreement.

CHILDCARE EXPENSES AND TAX REPORTING

As a licensed childcare facility, expenses for the year are a valid tax expense. Billing statements for FSA accounts or year-end tax reporting are easily accessible through our childcare app. Temple Beth Israel's tax ID number is 95-2111157.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

To withdraw from the program, written notice must be given to the Director one month in advance of the child's last day and a Change of Services form completed. If appropriate notice is not given, the parent/guardian is responsible for that final month's tuition, regardless of the child's last day of attendance.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

HOURS OF OPERATION & HOLIDAYS

Tree of Life Children's Center is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. We observe most federal holidays as well as some Jewish holidays. Our yearly calendar with all site closures and school events is available on the website, and may change slightly year to year due to when the major Jewish holidays fall. We are closed completely for one winter break week, one spring break week, and one week in August for site maintenance and annual teacher training.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Our program has an open door policy, and we welcome families to visit the classrooms any time and volunteer in whatever way you feel is appropriate for you. Volunteer possibilities include helping with a daily classroom routine, sharing special activities (cooking, music, gardening), and/or collecting classroom resources. Please note that regular volunteers (including parents) are required to show proof of immunizations according to California law, and must also provide proof of up-to-date Covid-19 vaccination per Temple Beth Israel policy if their role involves interacting directly with the children. Please contact the Director if you are interested in volunteering.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A concern about a teacher or any other TLCC staff should be reported to the Director. A concern about the Director should be reported to either the Rabbi, or the current President of the Board of Trustees. Either can be reached via the Temple's administrative office by telephoning (909) 626-1277.

DAILY SIGN IN AND OUT

A parent or designated person, who is at least 18 years of age, must sign the child in when brought to the center. **SIGN IN INCLUDES FIRST AND LAST NAME, THE EXACT TIME, AND MUST BE LEGIBLE on the attendance sheets provided.** This is in compliance with Title 22 Licensing Regulations. The same process must be completed when picking up the child.

AUTHORITY TO PICK UP A CHILD

No child will be released to a person not authorized by the parent/guardian to pick up the child. **We must have written authorization for persons picking up the child who are not on the child's authorization list.** Parent/guardians are asked to list persons authorized as part of their registration process, and can update the list at any time when changes are necessary. Unfamiliar adults who arrive to pick up a child will be questioned by the staff, asked to show a photo ID, and the authorization list will be checked before the child can be signed out.

In the case of a divorce or separation, court documents must be provided to inform us of any custodial decisions that impact the authorizations to pick up the child on days of attendance. In the event that custody is shared jointly, children will be released to either parent and to any adult listed on the emergency card provided by either parent.

DAILY ABSENCES

If a child is going to be absent, please email or call the center to inform us. Fees must be paid even when your child is absent as we reserve the space and staffing based on your enrollment schedule, not attendance.

LATE PICK UP

Children need to be picked up on time every day per their enrolled schedule. Excessive late pick ups may be grounds for disenrollment. A charge of \$10 per every

fifteen minutes will be incurred when there is a late pick up, and added to the family's monthly tuition statement. Should a parent fail to pick up their child (ren) by closing time, the staff will attempt to call those listed on the emergency form. After one hour, proper authorities will be called.

LICENSING AND REGULATIONS

Our childcare center is a licensed facility, and follows the Title 22 regulations which establish the health and safety standards for childcare centers. A licensing analyst has the authority to inspect the facility at any time, and to interview any child in care. The findings of each licensing visit are posted on the parent bulletin board outside the Director's office, or a copy can be requested from the Director at any time.

STAFF PROVIDING CHILDCARE

All TLCC staff working directly with children are required to take training beyond their current education and experience in both safety procedures and behavior guidance within the first thirty days of employment. Staff files are reviewed quarterly to ensure all licensing regulations are met, and training up to date. Each staff member is a Mandated Reporter, and receives Pediatric First Aid and CPR training. As part of our policies on the protection of children, staff is not allowed to provide personal childcare or use any personal devices to be in contact with currently enrolled families.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The child's file is available for review by the Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services, Law Enforcement personnel, Community Care Licensing and authorized Temple Beth Israel staff. We value your privacy and restrict access to your child's file to only those necessary to ensure the safety of your child.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RELEASE/SOCIAL MEDIA CONSENT

The staff at TLCC may take pictures or brief videos of the children and families for instructional, training and/or promotional purposes. Children take pride in seeing pictures of themselves engaged in classroom activities and school events. Pictures will be used internally for the TLCC community only (on classroom walls, as learning portfolio examples, and in classroom updates via the childcare app). A specific consent form is included in the registration packet for permission to use photos of your child on our website or social media sites.

CHILDCARE APP

Families will be provided information on how to sign up for our free parent app upon enrollment. This is a key communication tool between you and your child's teacher, and updates and resources from the center will be sent regularly through the app. If it is not possible for you to set up and use an account, please let the TLCC Director know so we can keep you informed about your child and events via another method.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

HEALTH CHECKS & ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS

While we understand the pressures on working parents and the need for reliable care, our program also has a responsibility to be a safe and healthy environment for the children in attendance. Thus, your child must be free of symptoms of infection and able to enjoy the daily activities in order to attend. Each child is assessed in the morning upon arrival at school, and should your child become ill during the day, they will be isolated with a staff member and parents and/or emergency contacts called to come and pick up the child within one hour.

Keep your child home if they:

- Have a fever or have had one within the past 24-hour period
- Is taking an antibiotic (for the first 24 hours)
- Have vomited within the last 24 hours
- Have a heavy constant nasal discharge, or non-clear discharge
- Have a constant cough
- Have symptoms of possible communicable disease, such as reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pains, or new/unusual rash
- Have head lice (until treated)

Children may be sent home for ANY illness concern at the discretion of the Director. A physician's note may be required for any contagious disease. If a child is absent more than three days due to illness, a doctor's authorization to return may be required.

We do all we can to prevent the spread of germs through proper handwashing and disinfecting materials and surfaces regularly. Please report any communicable disease to the Director immediately so families can be notified of their child's potential exposure.

Most importantly, we appreciate clear communication with our families as to how a child is faring, and aim to work together to ensure that the child can be included safely and resume attendance as soon as they are able.

COVID-19 POLICIES

As we continue to face the Covid-19 pandemic, families will be updated promptly of any changes to Health and Safety policies. Over the past two years, TLCC has followed County Health Department guidelines, as well as Community Care Licensing recommended practices for operating group childcare during Covid-19. However, we reserve the right to maintain stricter precautions and practices as we determine best for the safety of the children and staff. We have an employee mandate for Covid-19 vaccinations to be up to date, and that applies to all staff and volunteers who interact with the children. Temple Beth Israel's Covid-19 Taskforce is regularly consulted and approves any policy changes for the TLCC community, which may in some cases align but in other cases differ from Covid-19 policies implemented for other TBI programs. In the registration packet, parents will be provided a copy of current Covid-19 policies in place, and must sign off on the understanding that our policies may be updated at any time, based on our value of *pikuach nefesh*, preserving health of body and spirit, as the pandemic ensues. Enrolled families unwilling to follow any health and safety policies will be subject to disenrollment from the program, with no refund given.

MEDICATIONS

Medication will be dispensed to a child only if the medication is in the original container with the child's name, drug name, dosage time to be given and length of time medication is to be given. Written consent is required from the parent, the required form is available in the office and phone or email instructions cannot be accepted. Prescribed medication must be kept in the office, not in the child's cubby. No over-the-counter medications, including aspirin, cough syrup, allergy relievers etc. will be given without a doctor's note. For asthma inhalers or other health-maintenance devices, in addition to the

doctor's note, parents will need to review proper usage with center staff. The center maintains an Incidental Medical Services Plan, per licensing requirements, and will meet with families to ensure shared understanding of how the center can meet the child's needs.

AGES & STAGES QUESTIONNAIRE

Each family registering is asked to complete an Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The ASQ is a screening tool with high validity when administered by the parent or teacher. It covers five developmental areas including communication, fine motor, gross motor, personal-social, and problem-solving. We appreciate the parental knowledge of the child it provides to us as we begin our team effort to support your child's growth. The ASQ is scored by our staff, and results shared with the child's teacher to guide them in meeting the developmental needs of the child. Parents are promptly informed of the results. If a score indicates a concern for an individual child, the Director will meet with the family to consider further assessments, and provide support for next steps.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

We practice fire, earthquake and lockdown drills regularly with all the children. Emergency supplies for both short and longer-term evacuation outside the building are maintained at all times. In the event of a real emergency, TLCC will follow the guidance of Temple Beth Israel leadership, and staff will remain with the children and contact families. Children will only be released to parents and those authorized to pick up. If there is a blackout during school hours, children will be kept cool inside and hydrated and do quiet activities. Main phones will not work, but we have battery operated lighting available and will use alternate phones as necessary. If the blackout persists and presents conditions that are unsafe, parents will be called to pick up their child.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL CAMPUS SECURITY

Each enrolled family will receive programmed access cards to enter the TLCC campus. All gates into TLCC are kept locked at all times, and visitors must buzz for assistance. There is a charge to replace lost access cards, and cards must be turned back in when your family leaves the program.

The Temple Board and clergy maintains close watch on security concerns associated with events of antisemitism in the state or country, and continually improves overall campus security measures. When heightened alert is required, extra security measures will be introduced, and communicated to TLCC families at once.

Parking lot safety is very important. The red curb next to the education building means NO parking, as does the space near the fire hydrant. Please do not park at the red curb when bringing children, or picking children up from school. It is also important to hold children's hands when walking through the parking lot. **Please do not let children walk or run unattended near the cars. The speed limit in the parking lot is 10 miles per hour, please enter/exit with care.**

While on our premises, we follow state regulations that smoking of any kind, and firearms and other weapons are strictly prohibited. Additionally, we ask that adults not use their cell phones when picking up or dropping off their children. Please finish your calls outside the gates before entering TLCC.

EXCESSIVE HEAT & AIR QUALITY

Safety is our first priority and if it is excessively hot or regional fires negatively impact air quality, precautions including reducing or eliminating outside play will occur. Our staff receives training in Heat-Related illness, and daily temperatures and air quality index are monitored by the Director to ensure children's safety.

CHILD SAFETY IN CARS

It is California law to never leave a child unaccompanied in your vehicle. If a child is left in a car, we are required by law to report it to the police:

California Vehicle Code 15620. (a) A parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for a child who is 6 years of age or younger may not leave that child inside a motor vehicle without being supervised by a person who is 12 years of age or older.

It is also the law that that children be secured in a car seat appropriate for their age and weight:

California Vehicle Code 27360. Babies and young children must ride in the back seat, properly buckled up in a safety seat or booster until they are at least 8 years of age OR are at least 4'9" in height.

DAILY ROUTINES

FIRST DAY

Families are encouraged to set up a visit to the center prior to the first day of attendance, so your child can meet teachers and see the classroom. Parents must stay with the child onsite for such visits, but are welcome to participate in the classroom activities and/or outdoor play. If no pre-enrollment visit is possible, please plan on spending at least fifteen minutes with your child on the first day. Spend some time checking out the room or playground with your child, and try to get them involved with an activity. When you need to leave, tell your child goodbye calmly, and go. A prolonged farewell often increases anxiety and leaving without saying goodbye causes mistrust. Staff will be especially attentive to your child on their first day, and during the initial weeks to help them adjust and become part of the group.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Every child must be signed in and out each day by the responsible adult with a first and last name, and exact time on the daily sign in, sign out record (DSSR).

Teachers are not responsible for children until they have been signed in.

Our half day schedule is from 9am to 1pm. Children may arrive up to ten minutes before class. If a child is signed in before 8:50 am or after 1 pm, charges will be billed for the extra time. If your child attends 9 AM - 3:30 PM, the same rule applies, arriving before 8:50 am or leaving after 3:30 PM will incur the early drop off/late pick up charge.

COMMUNICATION

The TLCC office is open Monday through Friday from 8 AM-5 PM for regular business and it is preferred that you email or telephone the office during those hours. If you need to notify staff of anything before 8 am or after 5 pm, the childcare messaging app can be used. On the weekends, the Director will also check email on Sundays and get back to parents by Monday morning. During the day teachers will be on the childcare app only at certain junctures, because their primary role is to be present and active with

the children. They will use the app to send out reminders and updates on class activities, but if you want a specific update, it is best to contact the office so that administrative staff can help meet your needs. At any time, please speak to the Director if you have special circumstances or a concern with communication with your teacher, or the center more broadly..

OUCHIE REPORTS

An ouchie report is written for parents to explain any injury that happened while in care, and will be attached to your sign in sheet. Reports may *not* be given for minor bumps or scratches that do not require first aid (such as a band-aid, ice pack, etc.). If the accident involves the child hitting their head, or any accident is deemed more serious, staff will immediately notify the Director and the parents will be notified by telephone in addition to the written ouchie report.

CUBBIES

Each child is given a personal cubby or basket to use for personal belongings. They need to have a complete change of clothes, and a supply of disposable diapers and wipes for those who are not yet using the toilet. We also appreciate a jacket or sweatshirt that can “live” at school, for parts of the day that may be chillier. All clothing and diapering items need to be **labeled** with the child’s name please. Unlabeled found clothing is kept in the office for about two weeks, but after that will be donated to charity.

CLOTHING

Our philosophy of hands-on exploration and learning through play often means children get “dirty” through the day with us. Children should not wear any clothing that may limit movement or playing. We also want children to be as self-sufficient as possible, so please send your child to school in clothes that set them up for success as they learn to “do for themselves” - no complicated buckles, overalls, ties on dresses, etc. Clothes should be easy to pull on/off independently. We also require **closed-toe shoes** to be worn for safety. Jewelry and other accessories pose a safety hazard inside and on the

playground. These will be removed and returned to the family at the end of day. TLCC is not responsible for lost jewelry or accessories.

REST TIME

For children who stay for the full day, please bring a labeled cot sheet from home for rest time. All bedding is to be taken home weekly on Fridays to launder. A small blanket or stuffed animal for rest time can also be brought from home. There is limited storage space for bedding, please bring small items only. NO large pillows or any stuffed animals that make noise are permitted. Children who sleep with a pacifier may have one for rest time at school. These should be placed in a labeled zip lock bag and given to the teacher to store. The child will be handed their soother once settled on their cot for rest.

SUNSCREEN

Because we spend a lot of time daily outside, please bring your child to school with sunscreen applied in the morning. Sunscreen left with us for later application must be labeled with child's name, given directly to the teacher, not left in cubbies, and a licensing form completed. **We cannot apply any kind of ointment or lotion without the completed form, as licensing considers these medications.**

ITEMS FROM HOME

The sharing of books and materials from home for a specific activity is determined by each teacher, with consideration to the class schedule and the children's developmental levels. We do not allow toys that resemble any type of weapon or otherwise represent destruction at any time. These items will be removed to the office and later returned directly to the parents. It tends to be very disruptive when children have materials from home. It is difficult for them to share, and in some cases leave the items in their cubbies in order to engage in other activities. We appreciate you leaving your child's personal toys and tchotchkes in your home or car to enjoy again at the end of the day! We cannot be responsible for the damage or loss of items brought from home.

MEALS, WATER & SNACKS

Meal and snack times are exceptional learning time for children. We believe in teachers sitting with the children while eating, modeling healthy habits, promoting conversation about nutrition and having relaxed social interactions. Morning snack is eaten between 10 and 10:30 AM, a specific time per classroom is listed in the daily schedule for each group. Morning snack is supplied by parents and needs to be in a separate container/labeled/ apparent, as morning snack may be eaten outdoors. Lunch is eaten between 12 and 12:30 pm, and is provided by parents in a lunchbox. Lunch items cannot be heated up or stored other than in the cubbies. We encourage a variety of healthy, nutrient-rich foods to be packed for lunch. No candy, chocolate, sugary drinks or other “junk food” is allowed at TLCC, and these will be put aside by teachers to return to the family at the end of day.

For those children who stay for care beyond 3:30 PM, an afternoon snack is supplied by TLCC. A monthly menu is posted at the start of each month, and serving sizes calculated according to the state nutrition program (CACFP) guidelines. Afternoon snack is always vegetarian. If your child has other dietary restrictions or preferences, we will accommodate to the best of our ability but the family may be asked to provide afternoon snack in certain circumstances.

Age-appropriate self-help skills are an important part of our program. Therefore, in an effort to prevent tooth decay and promote skills in using a cup, we do not allow bottles or sippy cups at TLCC. Each child brings from home daily a labeled water bottle for hydration each day. We refill children’s water bottles with bottled spring water, and encourage drinking water regularly throughout the day.

FOOD RESTRICTIONS

As a Jewish program, we do not allow pork or shellfish on the grounds at any time. During Passover we also omit leavened breads on the grounds, and will provide matzah for snacks instead, and help families with ideas for suitable alternatives to *chametz* for the children’s lunches on those days..

We are a nut free center. Please do not send snacks or lunch items that contain nuts. Items processed in facilities that may have traces of nuts are usually permissible, subject to the needs of specific children enrolled that program year. An allergy list is kept current for each group and accommodations made for any class celebrations or school events to the extent possible. Please make sure the center is updated of any new allergies or dietary practices for your child.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special time for children, and your child's class will love to help your child celebrate. If you choose to celebrate at school, there are many ways this can be done: family can visit in the classroom, a special song or game can be introduced, or a special snack can be shared. In order to be consistent with our nutritional goals for children, we ask that celebrations not include concentrated sugary snacks such as icing-laden cakes or ice cream. A list of healthier alternatives is available in the TLCC office. Please talk with your teacher in advance about any plans you wish to make to help celebrate your child's day at school. If you choose to provide goody bags, your child will be able to hand them out as their friends leave at the end of day to enjoy at home. If birthday party invitations are brought to school, they must be provided for every child in the group.

ANIMALS

Animals are not allowed on TLCC grounds without prior permission of the Director. Please do not bring your pets onto TLCC grounds with you when dropping off or picking up your child. The exception to this is the case of a registered service animal, accompanying a member of our community.

FINGERNAILS

As a safety measure, please make sure your child's fingernails are groomed to an appropriate length to ensure that other children will not be injured if scratched. Staff are not allowed to trim children's nails.

TOILET LEARNING POLICIES

It is not required that children use the toilet before entering TLCC. Toilet learning is an important time for children and their loving adults, and we understand that timing varies per child and family needs. We support your efforts at home as your child becomes more and more independent. For school, a child is considered toilet trained when he/she can manage all steps of toileting independently:

- Reading the body's cues and heading to the toilet
- Pulling down/ undoing clothes
- Situating themselves onto toilet seat adequately and/or aiming into toilet bowl reliably
- Tearing an appropriate amount of toilet paper
- Wiping themselves from front to back hygienically
- Pulling up/ fastening bottoms
- Proceeding to wash hands

No child shall be punished, verbally reprimanded, or humiliated for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. Toilet learning is not coerced at any age. We follow procedures consistently, and review periodically with the family how toilet learning is progressing. We appreciate open communication and updates from families as to how they are implementing toilet learning and time spent out of diapers at home, so we can mirror these efforts to the fullest extent possible. When we see signs of a child's physical

and emotional readiness, we will support the family to develop a plan for toilet learning at home.

DIAPERING POLICY

An adequate supply of cloth or disposable diapers shall be maintained for each child. The parent/caregiver is responsible for providing diapers and wipes. Families will be notified when supply is low. If a child runs out of diapering supplies, the center has a small supply of extras available for emergencies. Pull ups supplied must be detachable at the sides please. If you would like staff to apply a diapering ointment at changing time, a licensing form must be completed, and the ointment labeled and given to the teacher.

Each child's diaper is checked at least once per hour. Diaper changes are documented on the Daily Changing Form, available for parents' daily review, and can be sent home upon request. A child's diaper will be changed promptly when wet or soiled. Each child is washed and dried with his/her individual materials during each diaper change. After changing, a child's hands shall be washed with soap and running water. Hands will be dried with disposable towels. Each child will be changed on either a changing table, or for older children, on a covered surface on the floor. A disposable covering is used to prevent the child from coming in contact with the changing surface. The disposable covering is changed and disposed of in a closed container after each child has been diapered. Teachers wear gloves and utilize proper cleaning techniques including correct handwashing procedures after diapering. Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed bag or container and will need to be taken home at the end of day for laundering.

Soiled disposable diapers will be placed in a designated container with tight-fitting cover, and a disposable plastic liner. These diapers will be removed from the center daily, or more frequently as necessary.

A change of clothing must be available for each child, however as your child is actively toilet-learning, we ask that TWO changes of weather-appropriate clothing be available and replenished regularly. It is highly recommended that the two changes include socks, and at least one pair of shoes.

FEES FOR NON-TOILETING CHILDREN

A toilet learning policy form is included in the registration packet for children who are not yet toileting independently. There is a monthly surcharge added to tuition while the child is learning these skills and requiring assistance. The child's teacher and Director confirm to the family when the child qualifies as reliably toilet trained while at TLCC, and the following month the surcharge is removed from the tuition bill.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Our goal is to assist children in learning to guide their own behavior. All behavior is communication, and the role of the teacher is to provide children with the tools for learning how to express needs in prosocial ways, and to learn to solve their own problems. The foundation for this to happen includes:

- Building a respectful and caring relationship with children, families and colleagues
- Designing an engaging environment for learning
- Establishing consistent and developmentally appropriate rules and routines
- Implementing developmentally and culturally appropriate learning activities and providing children with feedback and encouragement
- Modifying and adapting materials and activities to meet the individual needs of children

We use a positive guidance approach to enable a child to develop self-control, focusing on:

1. **Redirecting Activities:** Simply changing the environment, activity, or materials that seem to be contribute to the inappropriate behaviors can modify a child's behavior. For example, if children are throwing books, the teacher may get out the bean bag for a tossing game or gather the children in the group and model appropriate ways of using books by reading a story to them. This way the children can learn appropriate behaviors without constant corrections by the teacher.
2. **Natural Consequences:** Children are asked to correct what their behavior has caused. For example, spilled milk gets wiped up, thrown table blocks get picked up, a hurt child gets soothed (if appropriate according to the circumstances). This teaches children that all behavior has effects on their surrounding environment and on the people around them.

3. **Conflict Resolution:** Teachers facilitate children to talk through conflict, and support children to resolve and move past the conflict. When children are disruptive or largely distraught teachers will help children find a calm and safe place to regain self-control while having adult support, followed-up by active communication between teacher and child. TIME OUT IS NEVER USED, and no child will be left alone without adult supervision.

Through these methods teachers are able to maintain an environment conducive to self-control and autonomy for the children without fear of losing self-respect by making a mistake or testing a limit. Thus, each child will gain a sense of self-worth and ultimately self-discipline.

Children in our care are not subjected to physical (corporal) or psychological punishment, humiliation, mental abuse, or punitive interference with the daily functions of living such as eating, sleeping, or toileting (CCL Sec 1012230). This includes “spanking”, or the threat to use any of these methods of punishment. These forms of punishments will not be implemented under any circumstances, even at the parent(s) request.

It is our policy to work cooperatively with parents in cases of challenging behavior that is preventing the child from safely participating in the program. In the event that the parent/guardian is unwilling to cooperate or the Tree of Life Children’s Center cannot meet the needs of the child, the program may discontinue services to the family.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Incident reports will be filled out, a copy given to parents, and a copy kept in the office, if the child displays behaviors that are concerning to staff which may include, but are not limited to:

- Hitting, kicking or biting staff or other children
- Running away from the program//teacher

- Damaging property belonging to the center and/or other children
- Abusive, foul or on-going unacceptable behavior
- Defiant, disruptive and/or out-of-control behavior

When repeated incident reports are written and it is determined that more behavior intervention is necessary, a meeting will be called for the family and Director and staff to discuss strategies that can be employed at home and school, and a behavior support plan developed and progress/observations maintained. Staff and parents will collaborate and decide if screening may be necessary for developmental delays or other issues that may be contributing to the behavior. A follow up meeting is scheduled for no more than one month later, and the family is required to cooperate throughout this process of intervention.

Our program puts the welfare of the child first. If the needs of the child are more than TLCC can provide, or if the safety of the other children or staff are put at risk, parents may be called to pick up their child after any particular incident, and/or face disenrollment if the behaviors do not improve. If the family does not fully participate in these efforts, or decide they do not wish to pursue developmental screenings when it is recommended, TLCC has the right to disenroll the child, and no refund or credit of tuition will be given.

HANDLING BITING

Biting is a natural, developmental behavior in many young children, particularly those younger than three. Staff who work in our two-year-old classrooms receive training on how to handle biting, so that the program can be proactive and knowledgeable of an array of strategies we might employ. Communication is always prompt with the families of both the biter and one bitten when an incident occurs.

We recognize that biting is traumatic for parents, teachers and the child who has been bitten. Because biting is distressing, everyone involved would like to eliminate it quickly. Unfortunately, a “quick fix” is not usually available. However, staff do take

immediate action to comfort the child who has been bitten, to express calm but firm disapproval to the biter, and to find the cause for the biting. Each incident is documented with detail and families informed.

Most of the reasons for biting are not related to behavior problems, nor does biting make the biter a “bad child.” When a particular child bites on a regular basis, parents will be asked to meet with the teacher and Director to develop strategies and a timeline for follow up. If after strategies are in place and there is still no improvement or the child continually goes back to biting, other interventions beyond TLCC may be recommended. Our program puts the welfare of the child first. If the needs of the child are more than TLCC can provide, or if the safety of other children or staff are put at risk, disenrollment from the program may occur.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

You are your child's first teacher, and a child's early learning foundation relies on the support of an array of loving adults that include parents, teachers and other key family and TLCC community members. We invite you to be involved in your child's education!

Here is a partial list of events and activities parents can become involved with:

Serve on the TLCC Parent Committee

Sukkot Celebration

Fall Open House planning

Thanksgiving Lunch

Hanukkah Celebration

Passover Children's Seder

Teacher Appreciation Week

End of Year Picnic

Fundraising Efforts

Marketing Efforts

Helping with Tot Shabbat at TBI

Occasional Grocery Shopping

Gardening tasks

Classroom Projects

Your personal passions, talents and ideas for improvements!

Each family brings to our center unique gifts and can enrich the experience of the children collectively at TLCC. Thank you for being an integral part of our community and participating alongside staff to create a wonderful place for children to thrive!