

# Tarrytown Children's Center Family Handbook 2021-2022



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Dear Tarrytown Children's Center Family:

Tarrytown Children's Center is a vital part of the overall ministry at The Sanctuary. We are so delighted that your precious little one(s) will be part of our preschool family. We are so honored by your trust. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you on your child's educational and faith journey. We pledge to you our absolute best effort and our deepest commitment to making the time that you are with us the absolute best it can be for both your child and your family!

The church is not a building—it is a community. No matter who you are and where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! If we can ever be of any help or support, please do not hesitate to contact us. The Sanctuary prays for you and your family to experience the wonder and joys of growing together. Welcome to our family!

Yours in Christ,  
The Sanctuary

## **THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TARRYTOWN CHILDREN'S CENTER**

This handbook was designed to give you information on the programs, policies, and operations of Tarrytown Children's Center. We hope it is helpful. It is important for you to know that we are grateful for the opportunity to serve you and your child in a loving, safe, and caring environment. Any suggestions you have to improve our school will be welcomed and appreciated. The exceptional education Tarrytown Children's Center offers requires full cooperation between parents and the school.

## **OUR PROGRAM**

Children are our only business. They come first in our hearts and dedication. For over fifty years, TCC has been a ministry of The Sanctuary. Our classes are open to all children regardless of race, nationality, or religious beliefs with the understanding that this is a ministry of the church. Universal Christian values are taught and reinforced in age appropriate ways. We provide a program of classes for children 3 months to 5 years. TCC is a 4-star Texas Rising Star School. This certification is a commitment to higher standards through a quality initiative. Our teachers receive a minimum of 30 training hours annually. All staff members are certified in CPR and First Aid, with the majority of staff members holding a CDA or Bachelor of Science degree in education. We believe that children are a gift from God. We know that you have entrusted your children to us, and we take that responsibility seriously.

## **OUR PURPOSE**

We believe that as a church and school community, we are called to be a reflection of God's love and to share that love with others. Providing a nurturing environment for children and a place of support for families is one way we fulfill that mission. Our goal is to help each child reach his/her greatest potential cognitively, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. This is accomplished with the guidance of caring staff that engage children in developmentally appropriate activities. We pray that this ministry is a blessing to your family and the Austin community.

## **OUR CURRICULM**

Children's play is their work. They learn best through hands on experiences. We agree with Jean Piaget and Maria Montessori that children learn primarily through their senses. We encourage curiosity and appropriate risk taking. Children are given opportunities to express their feelings and learn to show empathy for those around them. Additionally, they are taught to use their words to solve problems. Classrooms are arranged with learning centers including blocks, dramatic play, art, music, science, math, reading and writing. Children learn to play alone or enter confidently into a group already at play.

Teachers work with children in individual, small and large group settings. Each child's progress is tracked daily. Some of the resources used in lesson planning are the WEE LEARN series published by Lifeway Christian Ministry, Handwriting Without Tears, and a library of additional resources. Lesson plans are detailed and align with Texas Rising Star, Texas Pre-K Standards, and Little Texans/ Big Futures.

## **CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE / GUIDANCE PRACTICES**

At TCC, we are a School Family. Our family is made up of children, teachers, staff, and parents all working together to make TCC a safe, nurturing place to create, explore, express, and grow. At school, we use an approach called Conscious Discipline to help us strengthen our school family. The TCC staff has spent a significant amount of time being trained in Conscious Discipline. The underlying principle behind Conscious Discipline is that self regulation is "something we seek to instill in children, not do to children." By creating a strong community where common routines and traditions are used throughout the school, our children feel connected, safe, and free to explore the world around them while building relationships with others. We provide them with the tools to self-regulate emotions, develop resilience, and learn to notice acts of kindness and helpfulness in others. Conscious Discipline is evidence-based and incorporates best practices in early childhood education. It supports a deeper understanding of Christian love and care for one other. For more information, please visit the website: [www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com).

*"Developing self-control, curiosity and grit in children... has the potential to change how we raise children, run our school, how we construct our safety net." - Paul Tough- How Children Succeed.*

Tarrytown Children's Center follows the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services Guidance and Discipline policy as stated below:

- Discipline must be:
  - (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
  - (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
  - (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

**A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:**

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive

statements;

(3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and

(4) Using brief supervised care or a separate “safe place” from the group, when appropriate for the child’s age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child’s age.

**There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:**

(1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;

(2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;

(3) Pinching, shaking or biting a child;

(4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;

(5) Putting anything in or on a child’s mouth;

(6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;

(7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;

(8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with a door closed; and

(9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for in appropriately long periods of time for the child’s age.

### **Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance**

Parents and Staff are required to read and sign the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (TDFPS) Discipline and Guidance Policy prior to the start of each school year.

### **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

It is essential for the safety of children in care that we have records and written consent pertaining to the safe release of children. In order for a child to be released to anyone other than his/her parents, written permission must be given to the office and the person must present a photo ID. Teachers use **Brightwheel** software to check students in and out of school, and to send home daily reports in the younger classes. This is available as an app on your phone.

## TRADITIONS TO EASE SEPARATION ANXIETY

Whenever a child begins school, it can be an exciting but difficult period for both the child and parent. The child may appear eager in the beginning but may suddenly realize that you will not be there and balk at your desire to leave. This is entirely normal. Here are a few tips to ease separation anxiety:

- Prepare your child in advance by having discussions in which you talk about school.
- Teachers will ask for a family picture to add to their classroom Friends and Family wall. It is often comforting for children to see their family photo alongside their classmate's family photos.
- Encourage your child to play upon arrival.
- Once you decide to leave, give your child a hug, and let them know you will be back after lunch. It is important that you do so without the temptation of staying if the child begins to cry.
- Pick up and drop off will be continued by staff coming to your car and taking children into and out of the building. This was successful during CoVid and reduced separation anxiety.

## OPEN DOOR POLICY

Tarrytown Children's Center has an open-door policy. You are welcome to visit at any time during hours of operation to observe your child, our program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval. It is requested that you call the center to see what activity is taking place. However, we ask that you do not disturb the children or the classroom. We find that once a child sees his/her parent, they are generally distracted and want to go to mommy or daddy. In the case of our younger classes, when the children see anyone's parent it makes them **all** want their own mommy and daddy.

# ENROLLMENT, TUITION, & TCC GUIDELINES

## PAYMENT & TUITION

We are dedicated to careful fiscal responsibility and good stewardship in our operation and expect the families who attend Tarrytown Children's Center to honor those efforts. The following guidelines apply:

- Tuition is for places reserved for your child, not for periods of attendance.
- A non-refundable registration fee shall be paid upon enrollment.
- Tuition shall be paid on the first day of each month. There is a \$20.00 late charge on payments received after the tenth of the month.
- After the tenth of the month, all accounts are considered delinquent and dismissal procedures shall begin. If a problem arises, please contact the Director as soon as possible.
- Payments should be made through your parent portal on **Brightwheel** which can be accessed at [www.brightwheel.com](http://www.brightwheel.com). If you would prefer to pay by check, please make arrangements with the director. A fee of \$30.00 will be charged on all in-sufficient funds.
- Children are to be picked up promptly at 1:00 pm (or 2:30 pm if that is their schedule.) There is a five-minute "grace" period for late pickup of your child. After that, a fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged. Be sure to call ahead if there is an emergency or problem detaining you.
- Late stay and early drop off available this year. But late stay is only for babies and one year old's, as the rest of the center can stay until 2:30.

## ADMISSION-Enrollment forms, medical forms, immunization records

**Medical forms** Tarrytown Children's Center health policies are developed from guidelines set by the Texas Dept. of Family & Protective Services.

Documentation of up-to-date immunizations and a current Certificate of Health are required to be in the individual child's folder **before the child's first day of school**. Guidelines set by the State of Family and Protective Services require documentation of up to date immunizations and a TB test (if applicable). If you choose not to vaccinate your child, we require an original waiver from Austin-Travis County Health Department. Each parent or guardian who signs a vaccine exemption affidavit form also is acknowledging they understand that their child may be excluded from school attendance in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the Texas Commissioner of Health.

**Enrollment forms**, new or updated forms must be complete and returned to the

office three business days before child starts school. Parents are required to sign the state admission form indicating that they have received, read, and understand the TCC handbook. This is a separate sheet.

## **SCHOOL ABSENCES**

Children do best when they attend class regularly. It gives them a sense of routine and consistency. Calling the office to let us know if your child will not be in school is greatly appreciated. In the event that your child is unwell or you are out of town, please notify the office either by phone (512)477-5851 or by emailing us at [tarrytownchildrencenter@gmail.com](mailto:tarrytownchildrencenter@gmail.com). The classroom teacher will telephone if a child is absent more than 2 days.

## **SCHOOL COMMUNICATION AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **CLASSROOMS**

Classroom news will be posted outside your child's classroom on the bulletin board with weekly lesson plans and class schedules (or through teacher communication via email or **Brightwheel** notification while in compliance with COVID safety procedures and policies). Newsletters for school-wide information will be posted periodically on the parent portal of the Brightwheel app to keep your family informed of school activities. Please read these carefully. Also, note the individual class information by each classroom door. Please check your Brightwheel app regularly for updates.

Parent-teacher communication is vital for the best care of your little one. The school e-mail address is [tarrytownchildrenscenter@gmail.com](mailto:tarrytownchildrenscenter@gmail.com) and school phone number is (512)477-5851.

### **PARENT NOTIFICATION**

The following methods may be used to distribute information from TCC to parents and families: notifications sent through the Brightwheel app, school-wide emails from the director; classroom emails from teachers; emails from class moms; school-wide or classroom newsletters; or direct phone calls from the director or child's teacher.

In case of an emergency or unplanned closure, parents will be notified through Brightwheel.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parent participation is encouraged. Parents should feel that they are a necessary part of Tarrytown Children's Center and parents and teachers are working in partnership for the best development of the child. We have many ways parents can volunteer in our program. You may choose to help with parties, special events or celebrations, share your skill, interest, or hobby with children in your child's classroom. Other opportunities include: being a guest

reader during story time, participating in the Parent Advisory Group, volunteering in the classroom, working in the Library, coordinating/ helping with teacher luncheons, providing office support, maintaining the art supply cabinet, volunteering during parent workdays.

## **TEACHER/FAMILY CONFERENCES**

TCC has two Parent Teacher conferences each year, in the Fall and Spring, for the Twos-TK classrooms. Parents or teachers may also request additional meetings as needed throughout the school year. The Infants' and Ones' teachers communicate to parents through daily reports (written and oral). Conferences may also be scheduled with the director as needed.

## **DAILY ACTIVITY & SCREEN TIME**

With the exception of extreme weather, each class will have outside time during the day for physical activity. During this time, children are encouraged to develop their gross motor and fine motor skills through running, jumping, swinging, pushing, peddling, etc. In addition to outside play time, children participate in movement and music activities throughout the school day. In the case of inclement weather, children 3 years of age and older may view a short (30 minutes or less) DVD that relates to the themes they are learning about that week and/or participate in indoor physical activities that are appropriate for the classroom. There is no screen time for students under the age of two.

*"The best exercise for the brain is exercise." - Dr. Becky Bailey*

## **PARENT EDUCATION & RESOURCES**

TCC has a lending library of resources on various child rearing topics. Through our association with the Austin Half Day Director's Group, we are also able to offer parenting classes during the year. Additionally, we host parent coffees with opportunities to learn more about Conscious Discipline and Kindergarten Readiness.

We are happy to recommend child specialists that we have worked with successfully in the past. Please know that we want to be a resource for you during this important time in your child's life.

## **CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS**

TCC staff is trained in the practice of Conscious Discipline. TCC is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment where all students learn strategies for self-regulation. In the event that a child's behavior is a chronic problem and unresponsive to these efforts to alter the behavior, the school may follow any of the following steps appropriate to the situation:

- Hold a conference with the parents, teacher, and director to discuss the situation and develop methods and a behavior plan for correcting the behavior problem

- Ask the parents to schedule an examination with a pediatrician for their child
- Ask the parents to schedule an examination for their child with a child guidance professional
- Parents are expected to actively participate in the resolution of the situation

## **POLICY FOR SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF STUDENTS**

- o Tarrytown Children’s Center takes suspension and expulsion of children very seriously. It should always be a rarity. We work with children, on an individual basis when behavior is causing concern in the classroom. When we have gone through the previous steps mentioned above for challenging behaviors with no change in behavior, the child may be suspended from Tarrytown Children’s Center. TCC will maintain a safe place for students and teachers. If a student’s behavior compromises the safety of that environment, the director may always retain the right to disenroll a child if it is in the best interest of the child or other children at the center. (746.501 Texas Licensing)

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In case of inclement weather, TCC policy is as follows: If AISD is closed or delayed TCC will be closed. If AISD is delayed, TCC will be closed. The safety of all of the TCC family is paramount.

## **UPDATING STUDENT INFORMATION**

Parents may update records with any changes, such as address, phone number, or emergency contact information, at any time by emailing [tarrytownchildrenscenter@gmail.com](mailto:tarrytownchildrenscenter@gmail.com). In addition to changes, updated immunization records may also be emailed. We are required to have updated immunization records at all times. If your child has a well check during the year, you will need to have his/her immunization record updated at that time.

## **VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS**

We are required to have a record of a vision and hearing screening for any child that will turn four years old by September 1st of that school year. TCC will provide the screenings here for a fee, or you may have the screening done during your child’s well check appointment and submit a copy of the report to us. The Texas State Health Department does not currently require TB tests in Travis County. If this policy changes, we will have to comply with their requirements.

## FIELD TRIPS/SPECIAL ACTIVITIES / TRANSPORTATION

Field trips and special activities are scheduled throughout the year and are an important extension of our school program. They are planned in conjunction with particular units of study and provide valuable and enjoyable learning experiences. Most field trips will be within walking distance. Parents will have advanced notice of all field trips. During any field trips requiring modes of transportation other than walking, all children will be required to wear a seat belt. If the child is required by law to be in a child safety seat, it is the parent's responsibility to install the seat in the vehicle that the child will be riding in. Field trips are primarily for the older children (Pre-K & TK). No child will be taken on a field trip unless they have returned a completed parental permission form to the teacher. At present, all transportation for field trips is by private vehicles. Notice of field trips will be posted at least 48 hours before the activity. **TCC does not currently transport children in vehicles.**

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### HEALTH, ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

TCC will conduct a daily health assessment upon arrival of each child for illness. To ensure that the health of other children is protected, and additional infection does not develop in your child, we ask you to keep him/her home when he/she exhibits one or more of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 99.8 or higher
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Undetermined rash
- Runny nose with yellow or green mucus
- Red, watery eyes or irritated eyes (other than allergies)
- Head lice
- Sore throat or earache
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Possible infection or Persistent cough
- Inexplicable irritability or persistent crying

We will notify you immediately if your child becomes ill while at school. If this should occur, you are required to pick up your child within thirty minutes. Your child must be fever and symptom free for 72 hours prior to returning to school. If your child contracts a communicable disease, you should notify our center immediately. When a communicable disease is reported in any classroom, a notice will be sent out indicating that your child may have been exposed. If you have any questions, please contact the office. At the director's discretion, a doctor's note may be required for re-admission.

**Sunscreen and Insect repellent** should be applied to the student by a parent

or guardian prior to school arrival.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES / ALLERGY ACTION PLANS/ DISPENSING MEDICATION**

- In case of an accident or sudden illness, we will immediately contact the parent, the child's physician, and persons listed on the enrollment form. In extreme emergencies, EMS will be contacted, and your child will be taken to the Emergency Room. In this case, all charges incurred are the responsibility of the child's parent or legal guardian. At least one staff in each room is trained to administer emergency first aid.
- School personnel may not administer any medications to a child. School employees will not administer any over-the-counter or prescription medication unless it is noted in the Allergy Action Plan. Please do not ask your child's teacher to give over-the-counter or prescription medications. The parent or designated person other than school personnel must give all medications.
- Allergy Action Plans are available in the office and must be on file and posted in any room where the child is present.

### **SAFETY**

Please adhere to the following safety rules while on the school campus:

- Do not allow your child to run ahead of you or run around unsupervised at any time while on school premises.
- Hold on to your child's hand at all times in the parking lot.
- Close all doors and gates behind you.
- Do not drive faster than 10 miles per hour in the parking lot.
- Cell phone use is prohibited while driving in the parking lot or inside the building.
- Do not leave any child unattended in your car for any amount of time. This is against the law and will be reported.

You are responsible for your child's safety once you are on the school premises and your child sees you.

## **WATER PLAY**

At the end of the school year, we typically have splash days where children may play in wading pools and sprinklers. We do not have any swimming activities at TCC.

## **CLASSROOM PETS**

We currently have only fish as classroom pets.

## **INFANT SAFE SLEEP POLICY**

All TCC personnel will follow these safe sleep recommendations to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: Infants will be placed to sleep on their backs on a firm mattress with a tight-fitting crib sheet only (blankets, other bedding, pillows, stuffed animals, or other objects should not be placed in cribs). If an infant is able to roll back and forth between front and back, they will be placed in cribs on their backs and will be allowed to assume a preferred sleep position. Infants will not have their heads or faces covered and may not use sleep positioning devices.

The Infant sleeping area will be kept at a comfortable temperature. If extra warmth is needed, parents may provide sleepers or footed pajamas to be used. Swaddlers are not to be used in the classroom. Pacifiers may be provided by infant parents. If an infant falls asleep in a bouncy chair, swing, or other restrictive device, then the caregivers will move the child to a crib for sleeping. All infants will be actively observed by sight and sound when sleeping. In addition to sleeping time, infants will have actively supervised "tummy time" several times daily to strengthen their muscles and develop normally.

Modifications to this Safe Sleep Policy may only be made if there is an Infant Sleep Exception Form on file signed by the Infant's health care professional.

## **INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

The caregivers working with the infants and toddlers are crucial to the quality of the program. Providing good physical care is the foundation for building trusting, secure relationships needed for an infant to thrive. Our staff members have been carefully chosen for their warmth and nurturing skills. They are sensitive to the individual, and they recognize that each child is unique and different from every other child. They have the insight into communication and are ready to listen to you and any concerns you may have.

Infants and toddlers must be fed breakfast before arriving at school. Each infant needs baby food (if applicable); a no-spill cup, multiple changes of clothes, and a sufficient supply of disposable diapers and wipes for the day. All food, bottles, and diapers must be labeled with the child's name.

Teething may cause occasional discomfort to your child. These symptoms may include an occasional loose stool or low-grade fever. However, if your baby runs temperature over 99.8 degrees or has two loose stools, we must assume it is more than teething. You will be contacted and asked to come pickup your child.

You will receive a daily progress report on your child. If you have any questions concerning these reports, we encourage you to discuss this with your child's teacher. Parent-teacher communication is vital for best care.

### **TCC supports breastfeeding by:**

- Parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in care.
- Accepting, storing, and serving expressed human milk for feedings.
- Accepting human milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name and date and storing it in a refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or no more than 24 hours if the breast milk was previously frozen) or in a freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for no longer than three months;
- Ensuring that staff gently mix, not shake, the milk before feeding to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components in human milk; and
- Providing a comfortable place with an adult sized seat for breastfeeding and coordinating feedings with the infant's mother.

## **SNACKS & LUNCH**

TCC requires that children have a nutritious snack at mid-morning and at 2:00 p.m. Each child will need to bring his/her own snack, lunch, and water bottle in a labeled lunch box. The children and teacher will eat together at designated times. The class may choose to eat lunch on the playground when the weather is nice.

Since parents

provide children's meals and snacks, the school is not responsible for their nutritional value or for meeting the children's daily food needs. We want to support you in helping your child achieve a healthy lifestyle and a well-balanced diet. We recommend that the snacks and lunches you send to school include healthy foods.

### **Examples of healthy foods include:**

- Protein: chicken, turkey, hard-boiled eggs, tuna, beans, etc.
- Grains: whole wheat bread, whole grain cereal, crackers, tortillas, noodles, mini bagels, pretzels, etc.
- Fruit & Vegetables: grapes, apple slices, orange slices, carrots, celery sticks, raisins, etc.
- Milk & Dairy: cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, milk, etc.
- Drinks: water, milk, or 100% fruit juice
- Desserts: fresh fruit is always a good choice

Specific goals during lunch and snack time in addition to eating a nourishing meal are encouraging and guiding growth in expressive language development and promoting thoughtful conversational sharing times.

### **Lunches**

Parents are asked to send healthy lunches. Excluding Infants, lunches should promote self-help skills:

Toddlers: Finger foods that are cut in bite size portions, sippy cups

Preschoolers: Foods that are easily handled with forks or spoons, containers that children can easily open by themselves (please provide any utensils needed)

\*For Toddlers and Preschoolers, food should be packed in appropriate containers (thermos for hot foods / ice packs for perishables). We are not able to warm foods, as it would require staff members to leave the classrooms and limit class supervision.

Infants: There is a refrigerator for Infants' lunches/bottles/breast milk only. There is a bottle warmer in the infant room. See Breast Feeding for additional details.

Allergies: If your child has allergies (including food allergies) please inform your child's teacher AND the office so that we can properly post allergy information in the classroom. Parents are required to complete an Allergy Action Plan.

- *Offer a variety of fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.*
- *To help ensure that grains are whole grain, look closely at the ingredient list to make sure the first ingredient listed is "whole grain".*
- *Having food available to provide a second serving to a child who requests it helps to ensure that the child's daily nutritional needs are met.*
- *Sample menu items, introducing new foods, MyPlate materials, understanding nutrition labels, and more can be found at [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate).*

TCC staff members are educated on food allergies and take precautions to ensure children are protected.  
Liquids and foods hotter than 110 degrees F are kept out of reach.

## **OBLIGATIONS OF PARENTS AND/OR GUARDIANS**

- A parent/guardian shall furnish requested medical information prior to first day of attendance.
- A parent/guardian or designated representative shall pick the child up and teachers sign them out electronically each day following school pick up procedure.
- A parent/guardian shall notify the school in writing (signed and dated) when someone other than those names on the emergency information sheet will be picking the child up.
- Parents/guardians are asked not to visit outside the classrooms during drop-off or pickup times.
- The parent/guardian shall abide by the church parking rules.
- The parent/guardian shall notify the school in writing of any food or medication allergies and complete an Allergy Action Plan.
- The parent/guardian shall notify the school when the child is absent or will be picked up at a different time.
- The parent/guardian shall refrain from reprimanding children of other families while on the school premises.
- The parent/guardian shall come to the school for conferences when asked to do so by a school staff person.
- The parent/guardian shall complete and return all paperwork, including emergency treatment form, health form, admission form, childcare agreement, and tuition agreement prior to child's first day of school.
- The parent/guardian may only distribute birthday invitations at school if there is an invitation for each child in the class. This is TCC policy. This also applies to special treats. The parent/guardian may choose to celebrate the child's birthday at school. Simple celebrations are best, offering cookies and juice boxes. TCC discourages cupcakes because they usually go to waste.

## **CLOTHING**

Children need to be brought to school in clothing that will enable them to play outside during the day when weather permits and free from concern of getting

dirty. Please do not dress your child in his or her 'Sunday Best'! Comfortable washable play clothes are requested. Tennis shoes or shoes that tie or Velcro are preferred. Boots and sandals are not acceptable. Children are continually active and still learning to maneuver in their environment. They need good sturdy footwear to enable them to run and play without concern for tripping or falling. Multiple changes of clothes (including underwear and socks) are to be left at the preschool at all times in labeled sealable (Ziploc-type) bags. All clothing should be marked with the child's name.

\*Lost and found items are placed in a designated area outside the Director's office.

\*TCC will not go outdoors if the temperature or chill factor is below 35 degrees or if the temperature or heat index is over 100 degrees.

## **AFTERSCHOOL PLAYGROUND RULES**

We are happy for TCC families to use our playground areas after hours, provided the following rules are observed.

- Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.
- Absolutely no climbing on the outside/ roof of playground structures.
- Swings should only go in a front-to-back motion; not side-to-side or twisting.
- Please keep children a safe distance out of the swing path.
- Please do not allow children to handle or pull on tree branches, vines, or other plants.
- Please take all snack wrappers, drink containers, etc. with you when you leave (ants and other critters love these).
- Do not enter the playground area until any TCC classes have completely vacated the areas. The playgrounds will be available after 2:30 p.m.
- Please keep all gravel or other items out of the drinking fountain.

\*If these rules are not adhered to, TCC will be forced to close the playgrounds before and after school hours.

## **IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION/ SAFETY DRILLS**

If we are forced to evacuate TCC (located in Curie Hall) we will relocate to Rawson Saunders' Cafeteria (formally known as Beverly Hall which is located at the back of the Sanctuary Campus- 512-476-8382). If we are forced to leave the Sanctuary property, we will evacuate on foot to Tarrytown United Methodist

Church (TUMC is located across the street-2601 Exposition Blvd.-512-478-2276). Teachers will contact you using emergency contact numbers. We will also send a Brightwheel notification. Notifications will advise you of our location and plans for pick up. We practice fire drills monthly.

Infants, ones, twos, and threes evacuate to the lawn by the cottage. Pre-K and TK evacuate to outside the fence by the playground garden. We have severe weather drills in our hallway every 3 months. If needed, we have access to the basement at TUMC. We have lock down/ intruder drills every 3 months. Each staff member has a complete copy of Emergency/Evacuation plan and there is one available in the office for parents viewing.

### **KEEPING KIDS SAFE**

Reporting abuse and neglect: Staff receive annual training in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children including how to increase awareness and recognize the warning signs and risk factors. Texas law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Family and Protective services or law enforcement. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith. If you suspect a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, call 1-800-252-5400 to make a confidential report.

### **NOTICE TO PARENTS**

As part of our commitment to provide your child with a safe, pest-free learning environment, TCC may periodically apply pesticides to manage insects, weeds, or pathogens. Pesticide applications are part of our integrated pest management (IMP) program, which relies largely on non-chemical forms of pest control. Pesticide applications on TCC property are made only by trained and licensed technicians. All applications are after the school hours.

Should you have questions about TCC's pest management program or wish to be notified in advance of pesticide applications, please contact the office.

### **QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS, POLICY CHANGES**

We welcome your ideas and want to be responsive to any question or concern you may have about the policies and procedures of the center. If you have an issue that requires immediate attention, please contact the director by phone, in person, or by email. If you need to schedule a conference with a teacher, please contact the office, and we can facilitate that for you. Drop-off and Pick-up times are not ideal for these conversations, as it takes attention away from the supervision of children. Please feel free to bring any issue to the director at these times. TCC believes that communication is key. Parents will be provided with any policy changes in writing. Parents will be asked to sign that they have received, read, and understand any such changes.

## **EMPLOYEE IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

Effective September 1, 2014, TCC has implemented the following immunization policy for all of its employees to be in compliance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Minimum Standards Rule #746.3611, which requires a policy for protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases. While safety of our employees and the children in our care is paramount, we have elected to make immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases optional to the employees.

Vaccines that we currently recommend our employees receive:

- \*Influenza (annually)
- \*Pertussis (TDaP)
- \*Covid

If the employee is not exempt from having these immunizations, TCC recommends that employees consider these immunizations. The employee must inform the preschool if there are any exceptions that would prevent them from receiving an immunization for a vaccine-preventable disease. If the employee decides that these immunizations are appropriate and beneficial for their health and well-being, and receive the immunization, they are asked to provide the Director with documentation that the immunizations have been received.

TCC requires the use of protective medical equipment to protect employees and children in care from exposure to possible disease. In addition to hand washing, the protective medical equipment would include gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer. Employees should not be in direct contact when they are ill or exhibiting signs of illness. TCC will monitor information provided to the public through the Center of Disease Control and/or other resources to determine the level of risk the employee presents.

There will be no discrimination or retaliatory action against any employee who does/does not receive immunizations for vaccine-preventable illness. The use of protective medical equipment will not be considered retaliatory when used by employees of TCC.

All employees will be required to sign this policy and the signed policy will be retained on file.

## **Gang-Free Zone**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child-care center is a

gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

### **Safe and Healthy Zone**

Our school property is a tobacco free, alcohol free, drug free, weapon free, and bully free zone. For all persons other than peace officers, firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are prohibited on the premises of a childcare center. (746.3707 Texas Licensing)

### **Most Recent TDFPS CCL Inspection Report**

A copy of our most recent licensing inspection report is posted outside the director's office for your review.

### **Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers**

A copy of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers can be retrieved online: <https://hhs.texas.gov/>

### **Department of Family and Protective Services**

You can access the DFPS website at <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>

### **Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline**

You can call the Texas Abuse Hotline at **1-800-252-5400** for situations including but not limited to:

- Serious injuries
- Any injury to a child 5 years or younger
- Immediate need for medical treatment (including suicidal thoughts)
- Sexual abuse where the abuser has or will have access to the victim within the next 24 hours
- Children age five and under are alone or are likely to be left alone within the next 24 hours
- Anytime you believe your situation requires action in less than 24 hours

### **Austin Child Care Licensing Office**

You can contact the Austin Child Care Licensing Office at #512-834-3426. For more information visit the website: <https://hhs.texas.gov/>

**Tarrytown Children's Center Hours  
and Days of Operation:**

**Monday- Friday 9:00-2:30**