



Parent Handbook  
2024-2025

Welcome to Treehouse Learning Center! It is our goal to provide each child with a joyful, comforting, safe, and stimulating faith-based environment. Our priority is to provide a healthy balance of child-directed and teacher guided activities, as well as time for children to work individually, in small groups and in large groups. We take advantage of the teachable moments that happen every day by fostering the intellectual, creative, social, emotional and physical growth and development of the children. We seek to inspire a lifelong commitment to learning. A play-based approach provides a child-centered curriculum directed by teachers in which children are encouraged to build up their own knowledge.

**Admission:**

Treehouse Learning Center does not discriminate based on mental or physical disability, age, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnic group, or national origin.

Children shall be enrolled on a first come, first serve basis. Please remember that classes are set up according to age group and academic level. Therefore, even if we are not at full capacity there might not be space available in the class your child will need.

**Annual Registration Fee:**

An initial non-refundable registration fee of \$83.00/\$20.00 per additional child is due upon enrollment, and then at the start of every school year a re-enrollment, nonrefundable fee of \$52.00 per child/\$20.00 per additional child will be due.

**Steps to enroll:**

If a space is not immediately available, you may place your child's name on our waiting list. If a space is available and you choose to enroll your child, you will be given enrollment forms to be completed prior to your child's first day. Upon enrollment or on your child's first day of attendance, we will need you to provide us with a Florida Department of Health Physical Form and a Florida Department of Health Immunization Record. If we do not have these forms, your child will not be allowed to attend. This is for your child's health benefits as well as others and is a DCF requirement.

From time-to-time, Treehouse Learning Center may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal beliefs. An exemption form must be on file for these children.

**Daily Schedules:**

Each classroom has a schedule that they follow very closely. For your child to receive the full benefit of their education here at Treehouse Learning Center, we ask that you have your child here no later than 9:00am. The teachers have prepared activities that your child will want to participate in with their friends. It also helps the

teacher maintain continuity in the classroom with minimum disruptions. Studies have shown that young children do much better after a good night's sleep, a nutritious breakfast, and an early start to their learning activities. We want your children to be their best. We are aware that sometimes you have appointments and cannot be at class on time; if this is the case, please let the director or the teacher know so that we can be prepared for your child's arrival.

It is important for your child to feel comfortable with a daily schedule. A familiar routine enables children to feel at ease with their new expanding world.

On occasion this routine may be altered with special activities, such as holiday celebrations.

Schedules will be posted in your child's classroom and parents will be advised of special activities in advance.

### **Attendance and Absences:**

**Children who arrive after 9:01am will not be accepted in school without a doctor's excuse.** A parent/legal guardian is required to notify the preschool office if their child will not be in attendance: The state requires that Treehouse Learning Center communicate with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of a child if they are not in attendance within one hour of scheduled arrival (9:00am), and there has not been any prior communication that the child will be absent. Parents **MUST** call the school if their child is late due to a doctor's appointment or if the child is going to be absent. Parents are responsible for calling the school and notifying the preschool by 9:00am. Parents/guardians who fail to notify the school about an absence or a late arrival will be charged \$5.00. Moreover, if the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) is unable to be reached then Treehouse Learning Center must notify emergency contacts.

School Readiness and VPK parents must also notify Treehouse Learning Center if your child will be absent. VPK children are allowed 3 unexcused absences per month. Any absence beyond that the parent is required to pay the daily fee of Treehouse Learning Center. School Readiness children are allowed up to 10 days of absences a month (3 unexcused and 7 excused). If your child is absent for 5 consecutive days with no contact from the parent, ELC will be contacted at the close of the 5<sup>th</sup> day. This is a requirement of ELC, which complies with the "Rilya Wilson Act" for each child at risk under the age of school entry. Children and family information is kept confidential and stored on site for 5 years as required by the Early Learning Coalition.

### **Vacation:**

After one (1) year of enrollment your child will be eligible for five (5) days (Monday-Friday) or a week of vacation time per year (August-July). **A vacation request form must be submitted to the preschool office a minimum of one (1) week in advance.** If a child is absent for more than the allowed one week, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will need to pay the full tuition rate for any other days or weeks to hold your child's space in class. For VPK students: this policy only applies to children enrolled in the full-time care. **For all vacation requests: your account must be current to use vacation time.**

### **Daily Meals:**

Treehouse Learning Center participates in the Child Care Food Program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provides healthy well-balanced meals at no separate charge to all enrolled children. We serve breakfast from 8:00 am - 8:30 am, lunch from 11:00 - 1:00 pm and an afternoon snack from 2:15 pm - 4:15 pm. If a child has a food and/or milk allergy, parents will have to have their child's doctor/pediatrician fill out a form, and the preschool will provide a substitute for the child. For breakfast, lunch and snacks, children should ONLY be served by the Food Program. **All outside food is to be consumed outside of the center. Outside food will be returned immediately or discarded. If your child is going to be late due to a doctor's appointment, please feed your child prior to coming to school.**

### **Bi-weekly Payments:**

We can ONLY accommodate bi-weekly payments if you are paying for the current week and the weeks ahead. Please plan your personal budgets accordingly.

### **Tuition:**

Tuition is charged on a weekly basis and due every Monday. If tuition is not paid by Wednesday at 5:00pm, there will be a \$15.00 late fee applied to your account on Thursday morning. If the balance is not paid by Friday at 5:00pm, there will be an additional \$15.00 late fee applied, and the child may not return to school until the balance is paid in full. Attendance is based on a full-time week. Parents are responsible for tuition fees even if their child is absent, the school is closed for holidays or there is an emergency school closing. There will be no deductions for these days. Should your child be out for an entire week due to illness, we do not charge you for that week if we have a note from the doctor removing the child from the center for the specified amount of time.

### **Signing in/out:**

The kiosk for signing in/signing out is located at the window to the front office. It is mandated by the Department of Children and Families and by the Early Learning Coalition that the **parent/guardian/authorized adult sign in and out each day for each child.** **Please remember adults only on the computer.** Attendance will also be taken in the classroom via the Procure app on each teacher's classroom tablet.

### **VPK- Students Only:**

You must obtain a VPK voucher from the Early Learning Coalition at:

<http://www.elcfv.org/families/vpk/#registration>. Lunch will be served to all VPK students daily in accordance with the food program. Students must arrive on time for class each morning, or they will be considered tardy. Students who are consistently tardy may be asked to withdraw. **Parents must sign their first and last name when signing their child in and out daily (this is automated in the Procure check-in app on the kiosk).** **These records are audited by the Department of Education. The school will be fined if parents do not sign their child in and out. The fine will be billed to the parents.** Parents must also sign the Parent Choice Form at the end of each month to verify that their child attended that month.

Students whose absences exceed 20% may be asked to withdraw. An unexcused absence is one that does not fall into any of the following categories below and excused absences are due to one of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the child or a family member requiring hospitalization or bed rest.
- A physician or dentist appointment.
- An infectious disease or parasitic infection.
- Death of a family member.
- Compliance with a court order (e.g., visitation, subpoena).
- Special education or related services for a disability.
- Observance of a religious holiday or services.
- Family vacation (not to exceed five (5) excused absences per program year).

Parents must present written documentation with each absence which will be placed in the student's file. Parents may present written documentation for three (3) absences per month. More than three (3) absences per month must be a written excuse from a person unrelated to the child's parent/guardian or child (e.g., Doctors, Case Worker). **a total of 7 absences == change**

#### **VPK Wrap-Around Program (Before and After Care):**

Wrap-Around or extended care is available for students needing care before 8:00am, and after 2:00pm. There is a fee for wrap-around care. Parents/guardians are responsible for these charges, even when students are absent. Non-VPK days are included in the wrap-around program (unless the school is closed for a holiday). If VPK students who are not in the wrap-around program are not picked up by 2:00pm, they will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$2.00 for every minute thereafter which is payable at the time of pick up.

#### **Security:**

For the safety of the children enrolled, Treehouse Learning Center is an access-controlled facility. Upon enrollment, you will receive two (2) key fobs. Each family can request up to five (5) fobs total per family. The cost for the fobs is \$10.00 for the first two (2) fobs and \$10.00 for any additional fobs or to replace a lost fob. **PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO ENTER WITH OUT HAVING KEY FOB AS THIS WILL DEFEAT THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECURITY SYSTEM.** You will be asked to return key fobs at the end of your enrollment.

#### **Pick-up policy:**

Parents and guardians must notify Treehouse Learning Center of anyone authorized to pick up their children. There is a section on the enrollment form for you to list this information. Under NO circumstances will someone who is not on your child's emergency list be allowed to pick up your child without proper notification. If the parent or guardian is unable to pick up their child, a person on the emergency list will be able to do so with proper notification and identification.

#### **Late pick-up:**

A late fee will be charged per child when a child remains at the center after the closing time of 5:00pm. This charge is \$10.00 for any period within the first five (5) minutes and an additional \$2.00 for every minute thereafter. This is per child. The late fee charge will be added to the account and billed on the following weeks tuition. If you are running late due to an emergency, please inform the center as soon as possible. If we are not notified 15 minutes after the center closes, the proper authorities will be notified.

### **Birthdays:**

If you would like to celebrate a birthday outside of school and send invitations to be handed out in class, please include the *whole* class. You may celebrate your child's birthday at school (no gifts) by bringing in packaged, store-bought cookies or cupcakes with light icing. Please let the teacher know in advance so it may be scheduled.

### **Photo Release:**

Treehouse Learning Center feels the best way to promote a positive nurturing environment is to display activities that happen within the center. During the enrollment process, you will be asked to sign an authorization form, or a "photo release" if your child is able to participate in center photographs or videos while he/she is in the care of preschool personnel. Such photographs or videos may be posted in classrooms or other appropriate places within the center, used in center presentations or promotional materials. You may at any time terminate your authorization.

### **Parent Communication:**

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the preschool if your phone numbers, address, email, and or emergency contacts have changed.

You will be informed of class activities, curriculum, events, and daily menu by daily reports through our Parent Communication portal **Procare Connect** which allows teachers to also send photos, activity information, and so much more, allowing parents the ability to stay connected with their children throughout the day.

### **Open Door Policy and Parent Volunteers:**

Treehouse Learning Center has an open-door policy that allows parents to come during business hours and check on their children. We encourage parents to visit at any time and we always appreciate the cooperation and help we receive from our parents in the classroom and during preschool events. During some events there will be a sign-up sheet posted in the classroom. We ask that you follow the dress code of our employees and children when you are in the building. A background check may be required for some volunteer positions.

This is your preschool and your child's education, so plan to be involved! Feel free to call or come by any time. We may also be reached by email at: [mytreehouselc@outlook.com](mailto:mytreehouselc@outlook.com)

### **Possessions from Home:**

We understand the difficulty of separating from family, and that some children bring special treasure from home that helps them feel more secure in transitioning to school. During situations like this we will have the

children place the possessions in their paper trays or their cubbies to keep them safe when they feel comfortable separating with their possessions, as we also understand that these treasures are not to be shared and are so special, they cannot be lost. We will get them throughout the day as they are needed.

Teachers will not be responsible for these possessions. Therefore, if your child is willing to leave these items in the car for the ride home that would be the best choice. Nap items, such as stuffed animals, can be kept in the cubby for rest time. Please make sure your child's name is clearly labeled on any items left at the center.

Any other items, such as personal toys, accessories, dress-up ware, etc., we do not allow to be brought to school unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been discussed with the teacher and are meant to help the child.

### **Bedding:**

Each child will be assigned his/her own personal cubby where their personal effects will be kept. These cubbies will be changed when your child moves to another class.

Each child is required to bring their own crib sheet and a small blanket for rest time. In addition, they may also bring a small (travel-size) pillow. These will be removed from your child's cubby every Friday to be washed and cleaned by the center for the following week.

### **Clothing:**

**We get dirty! Our daily curriculum includes lots of fun but messy activities. Therefore, we ask that children wear play clothes and shoes that are free from worry of getting dirty from indoor and outdoor activities.**

Please have an additional set of seasonal clothes (including extra underwear, socks, etc.) in your child's cubby in case of any type of accident. We ask that you enclose your child's change of clothes in a Ziploc bag and make sure clothing is clearly marked with your child's first and last name. The preschool is not responsible for lost items.

We require that all children wear shoes while at the center. This means during rest and quiet times, too. Sandals, flip flops, rainboots, etc., are not allowed. A closed-toe sneaker is the best form of footwear for active play while at the center. Any child wearing sandals, flip flops, etc. will not be able to actively play on the playground. You will be contacted to come and bring the proper footwear.

Jewelry of any kind, particularly with small beads and pieces, is unsafe and should not be worn at any time.

### **Accidents/Incidents/Injuries:**

We strive to provide an environment where children can learn and play safely at all times. We recognize that incidents and accidents can occur. Therefore, it is the center's policy to react and report all accidents or

incidents. If an accident or incident arises, a written report will be completed whether or not first aid is needed. The report will include the child's name, description of the accident or incident, age, date, time, first aid given (if applicable), action taken in regard to the incident, person completing the report, if parent(s)/legal guardian(s) was contacted, the time and the form of communication. The accident or incident report will be presented to the parent/legal guardian for signature on the same day of incident/accident. Copies of the report are also uploaded to the Procure App. In the event that the child is injured and needs medical attention, the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be contacted immediately.

**Health and Safety:**

All children are required to have a complete physical examination every two years and remain current with immunizations. **Please be aware that the Department of Children and Families inspects our files randomly. We strive to be in compliance at all times. We ask that you assist us in this matter by having all the required documentation upon enrollment and continuing to keep it current.**

Children must be removed from the center within **1 hour** of the time you are notified if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees and higher.
- 2 loose stools (diarrhea).
- Vomiting
- Discharge from the eyes
- Excessive green/yellow discharge from the nose.
- Unknown rash
- Head lice

Or any other illness/symptoms we feel could be contagious.

Parents need to have alternative care available for their children when they are sick. Children who have been sick may return when symptoms have subsided, and they are no longer contagious. Please understand these policies are for your child's benefit as well as others.

Listed below are some of the time periods that you must wait before sending your child back to the center. Please note children can return when there are no more symptoms without the administering of medications other than antibiotics.

Temperature 100.4 degrees or higher	48 hours without a fever
Diarrhea/vomiting	48 hours no diarrhea/vomiting
Colds and ear infections	48 hours after fever is gone
Strep throat	24 hours after medication is started
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	24 hours after medication is started and eyes are clear of discharge
Chicken pox	When sores have healed and there is no draining.
Impetigo	24 hours after medication is started and all sores have healed, no draining



Head lice	After treatment had been applied and all eggs/nits are removed.
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**Medication:**

We do **not** dispense over the counter or prescription medication. This includes ointments and creams. The parent(s)/guardian(s) are welcome to come to the school and give their child medication if needed during the day.

**Discipline and Expulsion Policy:**

Treehouse Learning Center staff will redirect children when displaying disruptive, aggressive or inappropriate behavior (yelling, hitting, not listening, etc.). If necessary, a child will be taken aside and spoken to about their behavior or placed away from the group to think about it for as many minutes as their age or sooner if the teacher feels a child is ready to return to the classroom activity. **We will not tolerate a child who continuously disrupts, hits, bites, or tries to harm other children and/or staff in any way.** If disruptive/aggressive behavior continues beyond the trials of the teacher, they will be brought to the office to discuss it and may or may not be allowed to return to class. If this is a continuous problem, at the director's discretion, parents will be notified, and suspension may be a result. Also, depending upon the severity of a behavior, a child may be suspended one to two times before being dismissed from care at Treehouse Learning Center.

\*We prohibit any child from being subjected to punishment which is defined as threatening or severe discipline, humiliation, use of frightening tones or words, threats of losing/withdrawal of food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited. \*

**Treehouse Learning Center reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any time for any reason deemed appropriate by the directors and/or owners.**

**Weather:**

In the event of dangerous weather conditions, Treehouse Learning Center reserves the right to close the facility to ensure the safety of the children and staff. We will do our best to provide notice of these closures with notes posted on the front door and in the parent area. We will also send communications through the Procure App, via email and utilize verbal communications **As a general policy, if Volusia County Schools closed due to inclement weather, Treehouse will also close.** This information is available online and on local news channels. Each storm/situation will be different, and we thank you in advance for your cooperation with us.

**Emergency Plan:**

In the event of an emergency that requires an evacuation of Treehouse Learning Center, one of the following actions shall be taken. In all situations, Treehouse personnel shall:

- Take an accurate attendee list.
- Account for all children and staff as they exit the school.
- Bring any necessary supplies and emergency records.
- Take a cellular phone to be used for emergency notification of parents. If possible, the phone company will be contacted and asked to forward all calls from our main number **(386) 671-7771** through to the available cell phone.

For emergencies where evacuation is not necessary, staff will close and lock all doors, windows and blinds. Children will be moved to a secure location on site with calming activities and a first aid kit should it be needed.

For any emergency requiring evacuation of the premises, the children will be walked over to **Ormond Beach Elementary School** -- where they will remain accompanied by Treehouse personnel while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified of the situation and plans are made for reunification with families. **Please make sure we have up-to-date emergency contacts, as children will not be released to anyone who is not on the emergency list or anyone who does not have proper identification.**

In the event of a major environmental hazard occurring during school hours that necessitates a large-scale evacuation, such as several neighborhoods, a city/town or geographical area (due to a large non-confined hazard, e.g., earthquake, hurricane, etc.), staff will follow the Volusia County evacuation protocol. The children will remain accompanied by Treehouse personnel while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified, and arrangements are made for their pickup. Staff will always remain with and care for the children during an event. Attendance will be checked whenever children are moved. Staff will bring any necessary supplies and emergency records.

#### **Student Withdrawals:**

Parents may withdraw their children from the center at any time for any reason. We do ask that you give written notice stating what the child's last day of attendance will be. To receive copies of any health records or tax statements the students' accounts must be paid in full. Treehouse Learning Center reserves the right to remove a student for any reason at any time.

#### **Confidentiality:**

All staff agree to always protect the privacy of each child and family information.

#### **Biting:**

Biting does happen with young children. A child may be unable to express themselves verbally and will often bite to show that they are angry, frustrated or sad. The staff will do all they can to prevent this from happening. However, if a child proves to be a habitual biter, it can cause the other children in the class distress as well as cause health concerns for the children. All reasonable efforts should be made to intervene when we know there may be a biting issue. Our policy is as follows:

1. The first time a child bites, his/her parents will be notified in writing.
2. The second time a child bites, his/her parents will be called to discuss the issue.
3. The third time a child bites or if the child bites and breaks the skin, parents will be called to come and pick up the child for the rest of the day.
4. If the child displays habitual biting (all incidents happen within a short time frame, such as days or weeks), the child will be withdrawn until the matter is under control.

If biting should occur, you will be notified with an incident form and or/phone call.

### **Holidays/Closing days:**

Treehouse Learning Center closes for select holidays during the school year. A calendar will be given to you at the beginning of the new school year.

Holidays will be celebrated in the classroom with a Christian emphasis. We replaced Halloween with a Fall Harvest Celebration during the month of October.

### **Curriculum:**

We use the curriculum, Beyond Centers and Circle time for our preschoolers and Beyond Cribs and Rattles for our toddlers along with other resources. Our curriculum is a research-based curriculum that provides structured learning through play-based experiences with a focal point on literacy development, sensory experiences and outdoor exploration. The curriculum meets the standards for two, three, and four-year-olds as required by the Florida Early Learning Coalition and the Department of Education. We incorporate bible learning through stories, songs and interactive activities along with character development stories, activities and songs every week as part of our daily lessons. In addition to preparing students for Kindergarten, Treehouse Learning Center incorporates music and movement, art and crafts, language and literacy, math, science and gross motor development in our daily activities. Our curriculum is designed to a perfect blend of play-based learning and academic readiness. Therefore, our students start Kindergarten with the skills necessary to be confident and successful in the years to come.

### **Chapel:**

Weekly chapel is a part of Treehouse Learning Center experiences for children that are three, four and five years old. Chapel is appropriate for all as it focuses on teaching morals and values that coincide with social and emotional development, such as respect, kindness, honest, etc. Chapel is conducted through the telling or acting of stories from the bible, songs and dance, interactive activities, memory verses and take-home materials.

### **Directors/Teachers:**

Each of our staff members has the necessary credentials along with love and experience to meet the needs of your child. All staff are required to have their CPR/First Aid certification and a background screening as an employee at Treehouse Learning Center. Each teacher continues to learn and grow as early educators and must meet the requirements of the Department of Children and Families.

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. We hope that it has answered your questions and put to rest any concerns you have had. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any other questions or concerns. Again, all of us at Treehouse Learning Center look forward to working with you and your child.