

# **Learning Tree**

**Before and After School Program**

## **Parent Handbook**

**Learning Tree  
Before and After School Program  
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## FOREWORD

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to Learning Tree!

This handbook is designed to give parents and guardians a helpful insight into the Before and After School Program offered. It includes detailed information about activities, procedures, and policies. Please read the handbook carefully and keep it in a safe place for easy reference during the school year.

The Center strives to provide an atmosphere where children can enjoy, grow, and learn. The staff always welcomes suggestions and ideas that will help us make your child's time beneficial and rewarding. We encourage you to share your thoughts and ideas with us at anytime.

Many thanks go to the school staff for their ongoing commitment to the Center, for their energy and the outstanding job they do with children each and every day, and to the parents and guardians of the children at the Center for their continued support and encouragement. The children benefit greatly from the many special qualities contributed to the Center by so many wonderful and caring people!

If you have any questions about the content of this book, please feel free to call me. I look forward to the time we will be spending together.

Best Regards,

Program Director

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## **Mission Statement**

Learning Tree Before and After School Program provides a safe, engaging, and nurturing environment for families requiring quality child care for before school, after school, and summer vacation. Our mission emphasizes creating an atmosphere that balances student learning, enrichment, physical activity, and free time in a stimulating and enjoyable setting. Learning Tree provides parents with a safe, convenient, reliable, and affordable out-of-school time care for their children. The Center maintains clear policies and procedures and actively encourages and welcomes open communication and parent involvement.

## **Learning Tree Staff**

Our outstanding staff is comprised of qualified child care providers. During the year, the Center works with other independent outside educational services. Background checks are performed on all staff members and vendors employed by the Center. Our operating policy for the Center maintains a maximum staff/child ratio of one to fourteen.

## **Admission Procedures**

Once a child is admitted to the Center, that child is guaranteed the same placement in the following year's program (subject to tuition payment).

## **Tuition**

Payment is due in advance of services. The amount does not change when the Center is closed due to Holidays. A 10% discount is available for families with more than one child enrolled in the Center.

Each child's slot in the Center is reserved for him or her only. Payment is due regardless of attendance. Monthly payments are due on or before the first day of the month. Weekly tuition is due on Monday or the first day of the week. Please make checks payable to Learning Tree. Please include your child's name on the check. The Center reserves the right to impose a \$10 late payment penalty per month and/or to revoke the enrollment of any child whose account is past due. If tuition becomes a problem, please contact the Program Director so that a payment plan can be arranged and participation can continue.

## **Hours of Operation and Holidays**

The Center hours of operation will be from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Center will be closed on the following public holidays:

New Years Eve and New Years Day  
Presidents Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Veterans Day  
Thanksgiving Day and the Day After  
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day  
Good Friday  
Martin Luther King's Day

A monthly notice will be posted as to the actual day and date that these days fall on as well as other special day or events that may arise.

### **Schedule Changes**

Although every effort will be made to accommodate schedule changes, any changes in a child's attendance in the Center are subject to availability. Two weeks written notice is required for any requests for changes in the schedule.

Any reduction in participation of 50% or more requires two weeks written notice. Fees will not be refunded due to a child's absence or withdrawal from the Center. Written notice of a schedule change should be submitted to the Program Director. Once written notification terminating a child's participation in the Center has been received, the family will receive an invoice detailing the charges for the child's remaining time in the Center. This invoice is due upon receipt.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are scheduled during summer break and some school vacation days and are usually available at an additional cost. Information about our field trips detailing times and location will be posted. Unless otherwise notified, transportation will be provided. Children should wear appropriate clothing and should not bring spending money for snack bars or gift shops. Parents are always welcome to join us and may make arrangements by calling the Program Director. The successful completion of a background check is required at least two weeks prior to the scheduled activity. If you would like to join us on a field trip, or for an in-house activity, please see the Program Director or Site Coordinator for additional information about completing a background check.

Attendance forms will be left in mailboxes for all field trips when tickets must be purchased in advance. In order for a child to attend a field trip requiring an advance ticket, a child's attendance form must be returned by the due date noted on the form. If an attendance form has not been returned by the due date and a child wishes to attend a trip, he or she will be placed on a waiting list and the family will be notified if a cancellation occurs. The child will only be able to attend

the Center on the day of the trip if a cancellation occurs. Children who are unable to participate in a field trip can stay at the Center with staff supervision.

### **Transportation**

Pupils transported in a school van shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to, the driver of the van and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the pupils while they are in the van or being escorted across a street, highway or road. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation.

It is our goal while transporting children to keep them safe at all times. In order for us to do this, the basic safety rules listed below must be followed:

1. Stay seated at all times while in the vehicle.
2. Properly wear seat belt at all times.
3. Refrain from eating and/or drinking while in the vehicle.
4. Use a low voice while in the vehicle.
5. Keep all body parts inside the vehicle at all times.
6. Adhere to driver's directions.

In the event that a child endangers themselves or others by not adhering to one or more of the above stated rules, the following consequences will result, determined by the Center Director:

1. Parent conference.
2. Suspension from transportation the following day.
3. Suspension from transportation for one (1) week.
4. Transportation privilege terminated.

### **Emergency Dismissal Procedures**

In case of an emergency, all parents or legal guardians will be contacted.

### **Sign-In / Sign-out Procedures**

All children will be signed in by the Parent or Guardian when dropping them off for the day. The Center also utilizes a checkout system to ensure that each child is dismissed to the proper person at the end of the day. Children will not be allowed to leave the Center unattended. Parents must walk into the school building and checkout with a staff member. The children can help with this responsibility by getting into the habit of saying goodbye to their teacher. The children may not go into the hallways or classrooms unless they are accompanied by a parent or teacher.

Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent, legal guardian, or person listed on the child's permission form unless the child's parent notifies the Center prior to pickup time. If a staff member is unfamiliar with any person picking up a child, the staff member will ask to see a picture identification before the child is released.

### **Child Custody Notification**

By law, if parents are legally separated or divorced, each parent has equal rights to the custody of the child/children unless a parent has a court order that indicates which parent has sole custody of the child/children. Learning Tree **MUST HAVE A COPY** of the court order of file, otherwise either parent may check the child out with proper identification.

### **Late Pickup Policy**

The Center closes at 6:30 p.m. We ask parents to arrive by 6:25 p.m. in order to allow the children enough time to tidy up and gather their belongings. If a 6:30 p.m. arrival is unlikely, please take a moment to call us at the office so a staff member can speak to the child about the delay.

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for pickup after 6:30 p.m. If a child is picked up before 6:35 p.m. the late fee will be waived. If a child is picked up after 6:35 p.m. the late fee will be assessed from 6:30 p.m. An entry in the late pickup log will detail the time of pickup and the amount due. Late fees will be due at pickup and payable to the staff member on duty. After the third occurrence of a late pickup, the five minute grace period will be revoked.

The staff is unable to remain on site after 6:30 p.m. for activity updates or consultations about children. We will be happy to discuss special requests or exchanges of detailed information over the telephone or a meeting scheduled during Center hours.

### **Program**

The Center strives to meet each child's need for physical and intellectual activities through a carefully designed schedule of educational, enrichment, and recreational programs. Throughout the school year, the children are offered a variety of activities at minimal cost to the parent. The activities may include art workshops, foreign language lessons, creative theater, computer courses, sports programs, animal adventures, cooking, music, dance and science programs. Most activities meet a minimum of once per week for a period of four to eight weeks. A schedule of activities will be distributed in parent mailboxes or posted. If a child does not wish to participate in an activity, they may be withdrawn from the activity with written permission from their parents. Children who do not

participate in a scheduled activity may read a book or use the time to complete homework.

### **Homework Policy**

The Center stresses the importance of homework and sets time aside every day for the children to complete their assignments. Staff members are available to supervise the homework area and to assist the children with their work, however, a child who needs individual help with his or her homework must ask. Because of the number of children who require assistance during homework time, the staff members are unable to check each child's homework for accuracy or provide the type of one-on-one homework help that is available from a private tutor.

Although we encourage the children to do their homework when it is assigned, using the time set aside to complete homework is the responsibility of the child. Please let us know if you prefer to have a child complete his or her homework at home. Children who do not wish to use homework time to complete their homework may use the time to read a book.

### **Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks**

Juice and snacks are provided for the children. A snack schedule will be posted. If your child has any food allergies, dietary restrictions, or prefers different or additional food, please feel free to send a snack with your child.

Breakfast and lunch will not be provided by the Center. Please provide your child with breakfast and lunch and label their bag or box with their name.

### **Possessions From Home**

Since we cannot guarantee the safe return of personal belongings, the Center asks that any personal possessions be left in backpacks during a child's time at the Center. Children may bring electronic games and toys from home if they are used during scheduled times and with the permission of their teacher. Responsibility for the safekeeping of electronics games and toys brought from home remains with the child. The Center does not allow the use of toy weapons or trading cards at any time.

### **Telephone Use By Children**

The staff will be happy to convey messages to children when necessary but it is not possible for children to make or receive telephone calls at the Center. Parents are welcome to call the Center at any time to speak to the Director or staff about questions or concerns regarding their child.



## **Halloween and Valentines Day**

We celebrate Halloween with costumes and a McDonald's party. The children may exchange valentines on Valentines Day if they choose. Additional information will be provided as the holidays approach.

## **Health Policy**

All children enrolled at the Center must satisfy the minimum immunization and routine physical examination of California Department of Public Health requirements. Documentation of the above must be on file at the Center.

The Center's exclusion and reporting policies for communicable diseases are in conformance with the guidelines set by California Department of Public Health. In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease or condition that is reportable to the Department of Health, a notice will be posted.

If a child becomes ill while attending the Center, a parent or emergency contact person will be notified. A child who is not feeling well should be picked up within one hour of notification. The Center will provide a rest mat and a quiet area while the child waits.

Children who attend the Center should be well enough to follow the normal routine of the Center. Children who have a contagious condition, eye ailment, head lice, rash, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, may not attend the Center and must be fully recovered before returning to the Center.

Please report any changes or emergency contact information, employment, telephone numbers, or addresses to the Director as soon as they become available. Although this information will be kept confidential, it will be shared with appropriate staff members to facilitate communication with parents or guardians in emergency situations.

## **Medication Policy**

The Center will dispense prescription and non-prescription medication only when the written permission of the child's doctor and parent or guardian is on file at the Center. All medication administered by the staff must be current and in a pharmacy labeled container. An adult must bring the medication into the Center. Children are not allowed to transport medication. Expired medications will be returned to the families.

A medication request form is included in the Program packet. Additional copies of the forms are available from the Program Director or staff.

## **Accidents or Acute Illness**

In the event of any accident or acute illness, every effort will be made to notify the child's parent and physician prior to treatment. If a situation requires immediate attention, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the hospital by ambulance.

## **Head Lice**

The Center has a no lice, no nit policy. If head lice are found, the parents of the child will be notified and asked to take the child home for treatment. A notice will be posted whenever head lice are found at the Center.

Children who have been sent home with head lice may return to the Center once they have been cleared for return by the Program Director or Staff of the Center. In order to prevent the spread of head lice, children should be encourage not to share clothing, combs, or hair accessories.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

The children and staff of the Center are asked to treat each with respect, tolerance, kindness, and consideration. The rules and behavior expectations utilized by the Center will be explained to the children clearly and reinforced in a consistent manner.

Children will be given reminders and redirection in order to encourage positive behavior. A child who is unkind verbally will be asked to apologize. A child who uses supplies or equipment inappropriately will be restricted from using the them for a short period of time. Any activities where participants purposely exclude another child will not be allowed. When a child is disruptive or needs time to regain self-control, he or she will be removed from the group. The child will be redirected and will be given another activity. The teacher and child will then discuss behavior options before the child returns to the group.

Under no circumstances will a child be subjected to neglect, physical punishment, verbal abuse or denial of restroom facilities. Parents will be notified if a child exhibits unusual emotional or physical behavior that threatens the well being of the child or others at the Center.

If a child has specific behavior issues, every effort will be make to implement a behavior management program consistent with efforts being made at the child's home or school. If a child's behavior indicates that the Center is not able to meet his or her needs, the Program Director will contact the child's parents to arrange a meeting. A parent or staff member may also request a meeting. With the parent's permission, school staff, and other professionals providing services to the child may be asked to attend the meeting.

Within ten days of the meeting, in keeping with the conclusions of the meeting, an action plan will be developed that establishes reasonable, attainable objectives for the child. A copy of the plan be given to the staff and to the child's parents. A log will be kept of the child's progress.

If the Program Director feels the Center cannot accommodate the needs of the child, or if the objectives established for the child are not met, the Center reserves the right to terminate the child's participation at the Center with two week notice. Pre-paid tuition will be refunded.

Any child who does not accept the physical boundaries at the Center, or exhibits behavior that threatens his or her well-being or the well-being of others, is subject to dismissal without notice. Any inappropriate behavior by a parent, including verbal abuse of a child or staff member, or confrontations with staff members in the presence of the child, is grounds for termination of the family's participation at the Center without notice.

### **Communication**

The Center maintains an open door policy. Please feel free to direct questions or concerns related to any facet of the Center to the Director at any time.

Any questions regarding tuition, policies, staffing, activities, or a child's participation at the Center may be directed to the Director. Voicemail is in place 24 hours a day and will record a message if no one is available to answer your call.

If a concern involving a staff member arises, please speak directly to the staff member involved. If the matter cannot be resolved directly with the staff member, the Director and staff member and arrange a meeting with that staff member and parent to discuss and resolve the concern.

The first priority of the staff is to focus as much attention as possible on the children. In order to meet the needs of the children and the staff during Center hours, we ask that parents limit their conversation with Center staff members to subjects involving their child. The staff and Program Director are available to answer all other questions that arise. Please feel free to call us at any time.

### **Personal Rights**

Each child enrolled at our Center shall be accorded dignity in his/her relationships with staff and other persons.

Each child shall have certain rights which include a safe, and comfortable environment to meet his/her needs. Your child will be free of any corporal

punishment, pain, humiliation, ridicule, coercion, threat or mental abuse. There will be no interference with daily functions including eating, sleeping, toileting, withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or other aids to their physical well being. Your child shall not be locked in any room or building or be placed in any restraining device.

The child's parent, guardian or representative shall make decisions regarding the child's attendance at religious services. Your child is free to attend religious services or activities of their choice. Attendance of religious services in or outside of the Center shall be voluntary.

The child's parent, guardian or representative shall be informed by Learning Tree of the law regarding complaints including, but not limited to information on confidentiality and the address and telephone number of the appropriate Licensing Agency Department regarding complaints.

### **Abuse and Neglect Policy**

The staff of the Center are mandated reporters and as such, are required to report all suspected instances of abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

### **Inspection Authority**

Parents have the right to request an Inspection Report of any child day care facility in accordance with the California Child Day Care Facilities Act by requesting to the appropriate Department notice of an alleged violation.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Department shall make a preliminary review, and, unless the Department determines that the complaint is willfully intended to harass a licensee or is without reasonable basis, the Department shall make an onsite inspection within 10 days after receiving the complaint. In either event, the complainant shall be promptly informed of the Department's proposed course of action.

The Department has the authority to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit Child Care Center records, without prior consent.