

Tam Preschool Newsletter: August/September 2025

Part of the Mill Valley community since 1956!

Welcome to Tamalpais Preschool's 2025-26 school year! We are looking forward to having you and your child in our school community. We have an exciting year ahead with fun activities and events. Teachers are looking forward to partnering with families to support student's growth and development in their preschool year.

Dates Coming Up:

***Back to school night** – Wednesday, August 20, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm

We start the meeting together in the church Sanctuary to go over general information and later separate into each classroom to hear from the teachers.

***Meet and Greet** – Thursday, August 21:

Children and parents can explore their classroom and get ready for the start of the year.

Creek Room: 9:30 to 10:30 am

Garden Room: 9:30 to 10:30 am

Ocean Room: 10:30 to 11:30 am

***Back to School Party** – Saturday, August 23, from 4-6pm at Sycamore Park

Dinner and drinks for the whole family to welcome everyone back to school. Come one, come all! Separate invite via Paperless Post (please RSVP).

***Tam Parent Coffees** – Monday, August 25 and Tuesday, August 26, from 8:30-9:30am

at Tam Preschool (outside the Garden Room, near the stage area)

We will be hosting two parent breakfasts after drop-off the first week of school. Please join us one or both days for coffee and breakfast treats!

SAVE THE DATE: Halloween Party and Fundraiser – Saturday, October 25, 4:00 to 6:00 pm

Parent Communication and Information:

This year, we are switching all administration and classroom communication to Brightwheel Message.

Download the Brightwheel app on your phone and turn on notifications to get information quickly.

We are working to making communication easier, faster, and more effective. Brightwheel messages include information from the Director and COO, a monthly newsletter, classroom weekly activity updates, individual messages about your child from the classroom team, and emergency reach out. You can also contact the school using Brightwheel Message to let us know if your child will be absent, there are delays during pick-up or drop-off, someone else is picking up your child, there is an emergency and your need to reach the school, or if you need to schedule a time to meet.

You will be able to choose who to message, so you can make sure you are reaching the correct person.

Director: Marcela

(I can be reached from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm)

Billing: Rose

(our COO can be reached from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm)

Garden Room:

(You can reach the Lead Teachers from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm)

Lead Teacher: Michelle M (Mimi) and Michelle S (Michie)

Teacher: Gina

Support Teacher: Louise

Ocean Room:

(You can reach the Lead Teacher from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm)

Lead Teacher: Monica

Teachers: Jacky, and Sara

Support Teacher: Kimberly

Creek Room:

(You can reach the Lead Teacher from 9:00 am 5:00 pm)

Lead Teacher: Leslie

Teachers: Gris, Christian, and Amy

Support Teacher: Yara

Morning and Aftercare Lead Teachers:

(You can reach the Lead Teacher from 7:30 am 5:00 pm)

Lead Teachers: Monica and Leslie

Class Curriculum:

Our curriculum is age appropriate for each classroom. Teachers share curriculum information and photos once a week using ***Brightwheel Message*** to show families the weekly activities and give you a glimpse into your child's school life. We hope you enjoy the photos and talk about them with your child, as they help expand conversations and help children process what they learned in school.

Enrichment Activity: Scheduled for all the classrooms in the mornings

***Jamaroo, our music and movement specialist**, is with us every Monday, starting August 25. We have been working with Jamaroo for about 15 years and enjoy all the fun activities they provide for our younger groups.

***Diego, our Capoeira Coach from Electivity Kids**, will support our physical education curriculum this year. He comes to our school every Wednesday, starting August 27. Please make sure children wear sneakers and comfortable clothes for running and climbing.

Monthly Special Activities:

*Dance Class with Caitlin Bechelli – Thursday, October 30

*Dentis Visit – Friday, November 14

*Holiday Puppet Show (Family Event)– Friday, December 19, at 11:30 am

*Music and Storytelling with “Cascada de Flores”: Friday, January 23

*Bubble Lady – Thursday, February 12

*Lizard Lady – Friday, March 20

*Petting Zoo – Friday, April 24

*Insect Discovery Lab – Friday, May 15

Our Enrichment and Equipment Fund, plus school donations, pays for these wonderful school activities. Your contribution makes that possible. Thank you so much for your support!

Fall Conferences:

Conferences are an opportunity to talk individually with your child's classroom Lead Teacher. They last about 20 minutes, and we meet in the Fall and the Spring. The Fall conference focuses on providing us with insight about your child to help us set individual goals for the year, as well as to give families an update about your child's school life. Each class will be sending Fall conference information soon.

Parking:

Families can only park in preschool and pre-k assigned spots. We are not allowed to park in church assigned parking spots (located across from the sanctuary and the church office), or the red zones in front of the church. If you are doing a quick drop off and pick up, you can park in the unmarked spots if one is free, but you cannot linger on an unmarked spot.

Children and families are walking in the parking lot, so please drive slowly and carefully. The road next to the creek, leading to our back parking lot, becomes a one way street once passing Fellowship Hall. Cars in the small back parking lot, next to the Ocean Room and the Preschool Office, must exit to Camino Alto.

*Our back parking lot, next to the creek, will be getting some repair work done soon. The lot will be closed for approximately 2 weeks. We expect to get a notice from the church soon. You may see the lot blocked off starting from Fellowship Hall. Our school will be able to park in the gravel parking lot, in the front of the church, or any unmarked spots while the work is being done. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Dropping off your child at school:

School starts at 9:00 am. Morning Care is available from 8:00 to 9:00 am every day on a drop-in basis, no need to have an early drop off reservation, an extra \$12 charge will be added daily. For Morning Care, Ocean and Garden Room students get dropped off in their classroom, Creek Room students need to be dropped off in the Ocean Room.

A Teacher will be at the door in each classroom from 9:00 to 9:10 am to help you with drop-off and for a quick check in. Classroom activities start around 9:10 am. Please make sure to be on time for drop-off, so your child transitions easier and doesn't miss out on morning activities. The classroom doors will close around 9:10 am. to keep everyone inside safe. At that time, teachers must also step away from the front door, as they need to help supervise the students in the classroom and start the morning routine, so please be on time for drop off. If you are late and the door is closed, ring the doorbell or message the Lead Teachers or Director on Brightwheel.

***The Garden Room** entrance is located behind Fellowship Hall, near the wooden outdoor stage. Class starts at 9:00 am.

***The Ocean Room** entrance is located under the car awning facing the creek, in the back of the church complex. Class starts at 9:00 am.

***The Creek Room** entrance is marked as Room #3, located in the church office courtyard, near the front area of the church complex. Class starts at 9:00 am. **Morning Care for the Creek Room is available in the Ocean Room area starting at 8:00 am.** Just before 9:00 am, Creek Room Teachers will walk their students to their class. Please be mindful of the "Creek Room Train".

When dropping off your child, walk to their designated classroom door to be greeted by the teachers for a quick door drop off. Please make sure everyone who is dropping off or picking up your child has been added to

the pick-up list and knows how to use our digital sign-in system on Brightwheel. A pre-activated digit code is required to use the system (an iPad will be available at school to help with the process).

Starting school is a big step for you and your child. There may be tears, but teachers will always be near to hold and comfort your child. Even if your child has been at our school before, your child will likely be in a new class with new teachers. Please let us know how we can support you. Teachers will follow your lead and you can give us a signal if you need us to hold your child.

Tears are normal, especially at the beginning of the year. If you linger and hesitate by the door, your child will feel nervous and reluctant to enter. Stay calm and strong to help your child. A quick drop offs tend to work best, as the longer their transition becomes, the longer it takes for children to calm down and transition into school. Teachers will comfort your child and create bonds that will help with future transitions. We will message you on Brightwheel if your child is not engaging at school, and we can create an individual plan to transition if needed. We like to try a simple goodbye at the door on the first day of school because children often surprise us and rise to the occasion. Please do not linger around the school area after dropping off, as it can be distracting for the class and your child may see you. I know it may be hard, but if you set clear expectations and boundaries with your child at drop off, it will help with transition and pay off in the future.

Pick-Up Time:

The regular school day ends at 1:00 p.m. We have a 3:00 and 5:00 pm late pick up available for an extra charge. Aftercare reservations are required, and our program is full for the year. You can add your child to the waitlist and check in with the Aftercare Lead Teachers, Monica and Leslie. Due to the large number of afternoon students, only permanent reservations will be allowed this year, we are not able to accommodate drop-in spots.

1:00 pm pick-up is done in your child's morning classroom. The Garden Room closes at 1:10, so Garden students who stay for aftercare, can be picked up in the Ocean Room at 3:00 or 5:00 pm. The Creek Room closes after 3:10 pm, so if you are picking up a Creek student after 3:10 pm, please come to the Ocean Room class.

At pick up time, the classroom doors will open, and the Lead Teacher will be ready for pick up from 12:50 to 1:05 p.m. as well as 10 minutes before 3:00 or 5:00 pm. Teachers will call children to the entrance as parents approach. Students can only be released to those individuals designated by parents/guardians and must be at least 18 years of age. If someone else is picking up your child, you need to inform the school ahead of time. People picking up must be ready to show an ID if a teacher does not recognize him/her.

Children not picked up by 1:10 p.m. or by 3:10pm, if scheduled for a later pick up, will be transferred to the next Aftercare block. If your child does not have a reservation for a later block, you, and possibly people in the emergency list, will be contacted for pick up. Children get nervous if they get picked up late, so please let the classroom teachers know if you think you may run late, so we can comfort your child.

A prompt pick-up helps us keep the program running smoothly, as teachers have limited time to be at the door. If a child is continuously picked up late, we may need to revoke their afternoon spot, as it disrupts the program. **Teachers are working long hours to be able to accommodate the late 5:00 pm pick up. Please make sure you pick up your child by 5:00 pm to allow teachers to go home on time. There is no grace period for closing time after 5:00 pm.**

Make sure people who pick up your child on a regular basis are listed in your child's pick-up list at school (in The Emergency Form). They also need to know how to use the digital sign-in system. People on your pick-up

list should know they may be called to pick up your child if there is an emergency and we cannot reach you.

If a family is signed up for aftercare, but is not using the spot, we may need to cancel their reservation to allow an accurate count for the group and possibly open a spot for someone else.

Extended Care Hours:

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. (\$12.00) One hour block only

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (\$24.00) Two hour blocks only - Full

3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (\$26.00) Two hour blocks only - Full

*Teachers will have clipboard at Back to School and the Meet and Greet to confirm information.

What to bring to school and things to keep in mind:

1. Communicate directly on Brightwheel with the Director or classroom Lead Teacher for general school and classroom questions.

2. Double check your list of approved people who are allowed to pick up your child from school, listed in the *Emergency Form*, and let us know if someone else is picking up your child.

3. Preschool children must be allowed a rest or nap time at school; it is a State law. Please Bring a nap/rest-time kit, like this one from Amazon, ALL children must have one. We will provide a cover to help prevent lice exposure:

https://www.amazon.com/Baby-Boom-Nap-Mat-Set/dp/B07CDZVX6K/ref=sr_1_13?crid=2P6LYIX09AMXX&keywords=child+sleeping+bag&qid=1688964532&sprefix=child+sleeping+bag%2Caps%2C164&sr=8-13

*Let us know if your child should be in the napping or resting room, so teachers can prepare the right spot for your child. Napping children will be in a quiet area with lower lighting and soothing music. Resting children will be in a bright noisier area, and we can offer a quite activity if needed. Sometimes, children can fall asleep in the rest area if he/she is tired. We cannot keep a child from sleeping if he/she really feels like napping. Their body may need to rest and that is why the law exists for preschoolers. **We are also not allowed to wake up your child if he/she falls asleep at school.** Talk with the Aftercare Lead Teachers to create a rest plan for your child if needed, we will do our best.

4. Bring a nutritious lunch (nut-free). The school will provide a snack in the morning and another in the afternoon. If your child needs special food due to allergies or sensitivities, please tell a teacher to help support your child's needs.

5. Bring a small zip-lock bag with extra clothes to keep in your child's cubby. Please mark the bag with your child's name. We do a lot of water play in the summer, so expect to refill the bag often.

6. Children have toilet reminders as part of our "potty times" at school, and teachers work with parents on toilet training. Teachers will help all children with their toileting needs and can support training after parents start the process at home. Students should wear pants that are easy to pull down and up for toilet use. Let us know if your child is still using diapers or pull-ups, as well as nap diapers in Aftercare. Please bring diapers/pull-ups to school.

*For a child to be considered toilet trained, they need to be able to say when they need to go to the toilet without prompting, pull their garments up and down on their own, wipe themselves, and wash their hands. If

your child cannot do all the above, they are still in training, and not fully toilet trained. Let us know where your child is in the toilet training process, so we can help. Teachers will have clipboard at Back to School and the Meet and Greet collecting information.

7. Apply sunblock every morning and bring a hat with your child's name if desired.

8. Label ALL your child's belongings (clothing items, lunch box, food containers, backpack, nap bags, hats, etc.)

9. Children should wear comfortable running shoes (No flip-flops, crocs, or shoes that may be too big and slip off). Keep in mind we have sand and tanbark in the playground, and they can get into sandals or shoes without a strong sole. We also want shoes to be secure for climbing and bike use at school.

10. The clothes children wear to school should be meant to get messy and be comfortable for playing. Also, they should be easy to pull up or down in the bathroom (leggings or sweatpants are best).

11. Let a teacher know if your child needs medication to be administered at school on a regular basis, while sick, or in an emergency. There is a form needed for medication, so please contact me to get one on Brightwheel. Medication needs to be provided by the parent to keep at school. Please schedule a meeting with us to go over medication information.

12. Toys from home should not come to school. Home toys get broken, lost, and create sharing conflicts in the classroom. If your child needs a transitional object to help him/her at school, please check with the Lead Teacher.

Health Reminder:

*We ask that you keep your child home if he or she is not feeling well. If your child looks under the weather when he or she wakes up, please give your child a day at home to rest and make sure he/she is well, as symptoms can worsen as the day goes on. If children come to school sick, not only will they spread germs, but your child will not enjoy their day at school feeling sick and recovery may take longer without proper rest.

*If your child suffers from allergies, please inform the teacher. Even with allergies, children may not be at school with severely runny nose or cough, as it can bring discomfort to the child. When allergies are acting up, and are not under control, children are just not well enough to participate in school activities.

*If a child starts to show illness symptoms at school, a teacher will isolate with the child away from the rest of the group and contact the family for pick up, as part of State requirements. Parents must have an emergency plan, that may include people in the emergency list who can come pick up a sick child within a short time. Children who are sent home with a symptom must check with the director to make sure the illness is not contagious. The health department has a list of contagious illness we are required to report.

*We follow a 24-hour health policy. If your child is home sick, or was sent home due to illness, your child needs to be symptom-free and/or on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before he or she can return to school. This guideline helps ensure everyone is healthy at school and exposure is kept at a minimum. Thank you for helping to keep our school community healthy!!

Lice are back in the area!! Students must be lice and nit free to attend our preschool. Unlike elementary schools who allow children to attend with nits, preschool students work and play in close contact, so they must be both nit and lice free. We will alert families if we have cases at school, and teachers will sanitize the rooms/toys.

School Closures:

Our goal is to keep everyone safe at school and to remain open to support our school community. We really appreciate you trusting us with your child and family's health. We take that responsibility very seriously. We will close our school when the children and teacher's safety is at risk.

***We have to close on dangerously high smoky days (around 150 AQI), as it is a health risk for our children and teachers.**

Please watch for the AQI in AirNow.gov: <https://www.airnow.gov>. **We plan to close when the AQI is around 150.** Families will receive a Brightwheel message in the morning, before school starts, when the air is expected to be high. We wait until the morning to decide on closures because air quality can change in just a few hours and sometimes it is much better in the mornings. **We are only closing when the air is unhealthy for everyone, but please note that 101 to 150 AQI is not healthy for sensitive groups, and that includes children and people with respiratory illnesses.** Parents can choose to keep children home anytime they feel like it is best for their child, just let us know your child will not be at school. We have air purifiers for all our classrooms, which will be used to help with smoky days and germ exposure. We appreciate your support. We know it is hard to keep your child home if you are working.

Please let me know if you have any questions. We are looking forward to a great year together!
Marcela and the Tam Teachers