



City of Mountain View Preschool Programs

2023-2024 Parent Handbook

City of Mountain View Preschool Programs – Tot Time, Playschool and Nature Playschool

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WELCOME

Welcome to our **City of Mountain View Preschool Program**! We would like to thank you for choosing our program to support your child's early childhood development. Our Preschool Program classes, Tot Time, Playschool and Nature Playschool are dedicated to providing a safe environment for each child to grow emotionally, physically, socially, and intellectually.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

The **City of Mountain View Preschool Program** is creative play-based, which embraces the theory that children learn through play. Our teachers make a commitment to support families and children by following Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). Briefly, DAP can be defined as those practices which are both **age appropriate** and **individually appropriate** for each child. It is important to understand that DAP is a **philosophy**, not a method. In our programs, each child is recognized and respected as an individual, and each is nurtured and cherished. We have the most interest in embracing your child's strengths while helping them build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Teachers view themselves as facilitators. Teachers prepare the environment, offer age appropriate materials, and provide assistance so that children are able to explore their surroundings and make discoveries on their own. We do not believe in imposing academic pressure. By following Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP), teachers can foster creative, positive, and self-fulfilling attitudes, rather than creating anxiety or resistance toward school. Our hope is that your child will leave our programs feeling accomplished and ready to move on to the next level of learning.

CURRICULUM

The **City of Mountain View Preschool Program** curriculum ages 3-5 is designed to focus on the five main milestones of development which occur at the preschool level:

- Social
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Sensory/Motor
- Self-Regulation/Life Skills

We provide opportunities for children to participate in activities based on planned themes *and* the observable interests of the children. Our curriculum is incorporated through play, art, music, multicultural experiences, movement, using practical life skills, number sense, science exploration and sensory exploration. Children are encouraged to use their own creativity in their work. Although planned and prepared by teachers, the curriculum becomes child-directed rather than teacher-directed by allowing for creative expression and imagination.

ENVIRONMENT

Children participate in a variety of activities daily, including the following:

Circle Time - Circle time is offered daily. This is a special time for teachers and children to connect with each other and grow the student-teacher bond. During this time, we sing songs, have conversations, listen to stories, review concepts, and learn how to sit and interact in a group setting. Circle time is a carefully planned time in which children can develop a wide range of skills and attitudes such as confidence, self-esteem, improve emotional intelligence, a sense of responsibility, speaking and listening skills, friendship building, and understanding of how their behavior can affect others.

Learning Centers - Learning centers are typically designated areas within the classroom that provide students with exciting and interesting experiences to practice, enrich, re-teach, and to enhance learning. These centers are filled with manipulatives, art materials, books and other instructional tools. When children play in centers, they develop social skills, self-awareness skills, personal interests, and language and writing development. Teachers use learning centers as a period to interact spontaneously with children and take advantage of opportunities to enhance, extend, and process information. Centers you will typically see in our preschool classroom are listed and described below:

- **Dramatic Play** - The dramatic play area is a favorite among children. Dramatic Play is a type of play where children assign and accept roles and act them out. It is pretending to be someone or something else. Sometimes children take on real roles, other times they take on fantasy roles. Children learn many things through trial and error, and what better and safer way to try out various scenarios and situation than through pretending you are in them. Pretend play helps children understand the power of language when children engage in pretend (or dramatic play) they actively experiment with the social and emotional roles of life. Through cooperative play, they learn how to take turns, share responsibility and creatively problem-solve. The opportunities for developing creativity, imagination, and oral language skills in the dramatic play center are endless.
- **Blocks** - Block play helps children develop motor skills and learn about basic concepts of architecture and engineering. Block play also helps children learn to work with others and gives them creative design opportunities. The block center boosts spatial reasoning, develops fine motor skills, and explores concepts of math, geometry, problem solving, and cause and effect.
- **The Library** - Excellent reading habits begin in the early years. Introducing children to literature in preschool supports kindergarten readiness, promotes early literacy and supports a love of language and reading. A preschool library corner is a distinct area of the classroom with a variety of board books, picture books, early readers and comfortable seating. Libraries promote critical thinking skills and enhance creative and social development.
- **Arts and Crafts** - Children are invited daily to participate in both project-based art as well as process art. In project-based art, children practice following directions, using listening skills and

creating an end product. In process art we focus on the method behind the creation and allow children to explore art in an open ended, unstructured way. Children are naturally drawn to art as it is a form of expression as they explore materials and uncover possibilities.

- **Math and Manipulatives** - Manipulatives, sometimes referred to as table toys, are an important part of the early childhood curriculum. Children use manipulatives to practice fine motor skills, eye and hand coordination, visual discrimination, and recognition of shapes, colors, and textures. Fine motor skills used when working with manipulatives build muscles in the children hands that will be used for writing.
- **Sensory Center** - Sensory play is a type of play that activates and stimulates a child's senses. Often, sensory play focuses on stimulating touch, sight, and hearing, as those senses are most accessible. As children grow, they begin to play and, through play learn more about the world around them. Some sensory items we may use are, sand, soil, ice, water, rice, shredded paper, instant snow, shaving cream, beans, pasta, leaves and other similar materials. These materials can be played with and manipulated in many different ways for different results and exploration.

Outdoor Play - Each day the children will have the opportunity to play outdoors. Children who play outdoors improve their motor skills, body mass index, their overall health and muscle strength. Outdoor play enables children to "recharge their batteries," to reinvigorate themselves by engaging in very different activity from their classroom experience. Playing outdoors fosters both self-confidence and a sense of independence. Children will play outdoors every day unless severe weather prevents us from doing so.

Snack - Snack time is a time when we see the children at their most authentic and relaxed self. They get to choose where to sit and with whom and it's magical. Friendships develop over apple slices and goldfish crackers. Food interests are started when friends are enjoying something another child has never tried. Snack is an unstructured time that allows for natural conversations between children and adults. It creates a sense of community. Snack begins with hand washing, finding somewhere to sit and ends with the children cleaning up after themselves and washing their hands before moving on to the next activity.

RATIOS

Our preschool program is designed around the following teacher to student ratios:

Tot Time: 1:8 or 1:10

Play School: 1:8 or 1:10

Nature Play School: 1:8 or 1:10

FIELD TRIPS

If your child is registered for the preschool program, your child's class may be occasionally taking field trips to local areas of interest. Siblings may not be able to attend some trips depending on the location. Teachers will notify you beforehand. **One parent/adult chaperone must attend for each participant.** If the parent is unable to attend a field trip, it is the parent's responsibility to arrange alternative transportation and supervision.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- Please be on time when dropping off. Late arrivals make it difficult for the whole class to transition.
- Please be on time when picking up. Parents will be charged a late pick up fee of \$6.00 per every 15 minutes.
- Please socialize with other parents outside of the classroom to ease the transition for the children and minimize disruption.
- Please sign your child in and out each day they attend program.

If you are going to be late

- Please call if you can and leave a message.
- After 15 minutes with no contact from you, we will contact your emergency contact(s).
- After 30 minutes with no contact, we may contact Children's Protective Services or the Mountain View Police Department.

For your child's protection anyone who picks up your child must be:

- 18 years or older.
- Have a valid ID.
- Listed on your emergency contact form.
- Please update your form.

CLASSROOM BASICS

TOYS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

- Should remain at home unless they are for a show and tell day.
- Must never be violent or encourage aggressive play (e.g., guns, swords, knives etc.).
- Must be labeled with child's name.
- Please be aware that toys may be lost or damaged at school.

CLOTHING

- Should be appropriate, comfortable, and easy to launder.
- Closed toe shoes are recommended.
- Label all sweaters and jackets with your child's name.
- Please remember that messy clothes are a sign that your child had a good day at preschool.
- Please send a change of clothes with your child to school daily.

TOTE BAG/SMALL BACKPACK

- Please personalize it with child's name,
- Please bring it every day for art projects and correspondence to be sent home.
- Please keep your child's change of clothes in their bag and renew when needed.
- Empty it daily.

VACATION AND ABSENCES

- In the case of an extended absence please notify your child teachers.
- There are no refunds or make-up classes for missed classes.
- Tuition must be kept current to maintain your spot.

ILLNESS POLICY

Our Health Check & Illness Policy applies to all staff, children, and their household members. For your child's comfort, and to reduce the risk of contagion, children must be picked up within 1 hour of notification of illness. Until then, your child will be kept comfortable and will continue to be observed for symptoms.

Throughout the school year, it is expected that colds and minor illnesses will occur. In order to protect the health of students and teachers, we ask the following health guidelines be observed.

Children with the following symptoms **MUST** be kept at home:

- Fever of 100.4° or above
- Sore Throat
- Muscle Aches
- Difficulty Breathing
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Rash from unknown source
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Other contagious disease (head lice, chicken pox, pink eye, etc.)

COVID-19 DAILY HEALTH CHECK:

- All staff, families, children and their household members must conduct a check at home before arriving to a program. Should a child or any household member have any of the following COVID-19-like symptoms during the preceding 72 hours, we ask you to remain out of the center and notify the program immediately. We will comply by the existing COVID-19 guidance.
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Muscle Aches
- Difficulty Breathing
- New Loss of Taste or Smell
- Fever at or above the threshold temperature of 100.4° F

•MEDICATIONS/ALLERGIES

We do not administer any “over the counter” medications at any time. Recreation staff are not permitted to administer medication to children, nor can they hold on to a child’s medication. If a child has an allergy and requires the usage of an EpiPen, a parent and a physician must complete the city form before the program begins. Staff will need to be trained on how to administer the EpiPen. For more information, please contact the Recreation Coordinator.

• **FIRST AID AT SCHOOL**

When a child receives a minor injury at school, appropriate first aid will be given. Please be aware that teachers are not permitted to use any medications or ointments to treat a child. If the injury is serious, parents will be notified immediately. In worst case scenario, 9-1-1 will be called first.

• **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES**

If your child contracts a contagious disease, please notify your teacher immediately. It is the teachers' responsibility to post exposure notices to help prevent outbreaks.

We understand that children's illnesses may be inconvenient and frustrating, but we ask for your cooperation in following the above guidelines. We want to keep our children and families as healthy as possible throughout the school year. Thank you in advance for your help.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

The City of Mountain View uses a positive approach to discipline. All classrooms use positive redirection, which is redirecting inappropriate behavior to an appropriate alternative. We praise children for their appropriate behavior by describing what we see and how we feel, for example: "I see that you have picked up all of the blocks and put them back on the shelf. It's nice to have such a clean room." We encourage children's appropriate behavior by giving them positive verbal rewards. This reinforces a child's confidence and serves as an example to others to act in such a way as to receive this praise.

When inappropriate behavior arises, we believe it is important for teachers to be the facilitators in the problem-solving effort rather than dictate what the solutions should be. Teachers ask questions to encourage problem solving, and help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives and choices.

When a child is not making appropriate choices in a group situation, the child is seated by a teacher and given examples of positive behavior that is considered appropriate, allowing the child to make a positive choice. In a less structured situation, the following steps will be implemented:

1. Verbal reminder that the behavior is inappropriate and given an acceptable alternative.
2. The child is re-directed away from the group or objects that are part of the distraction and led toward a constructive activity in order to reduce conflict. The child will choose where they would like to work.
3. If the behavior continues, the child will lose that choice and the teacher will have to make the choice for the child.

We do not use the term "time out" in our program. Instead have the child "take a break" from whatever activity or situation may be causing the issue and is redirected towards a positive alternative and choice.

There are certain behaviors that are part of normal growth and development, but are not necessarily considered appropriate, Children resort to these behaviors when they are unsure of how to resolve conflicts, how to enter play, or various other developmental social skills. If a child has an ongoing problem with hitting, endangering staff, or putting himself or herself in harm's way, the following steps will be taken.

1. The teacher and program supervisor will meet with the family and a behavior plan will be discussed.
2. If the behavior happens again after the behavior plan has been put into place, parents will be required to pick up the child.
3. In a third instance, another conference will be set up with the teacher and program supervisor to continue the discussion to understand what might be causing the problem. The City of Mountain View reserves the right to dismiss any child from program if further incident occurs, or we feel that any of the following conditions exist:
 - The program cannot meet the child's needs.
 - The parents are not able to work with the City of Mountain View to find an acceptable solution.
 - The continuing behavior endangers the wellbeing of other children, and/or the child engaging in the behavior.

At school, we promote using kind behavior and work on skills to ensure that we provide a safe and fun learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

The City of Mountain View Preschool Program finds it important that parents and teachers continuously work together creating a partnership. Parents play the most important role in a child's life. Positive reinforcement must be consistent between home and school to ensure that the children are successful in using their problem-solving skills.

SNACK/BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We love celebrating with our students! If you decide to bring a treat or goody bag to share, please let the teachers know ahead of time and to ensure your food item can be eaten by all students.

Please use the following suggestions to guide you: Please ask the teacher.

No Nuts Please. We are a nut free classroom.

We CAN accept -

- Fruit, Crackers
- Muffins
- Frozen juice bars
- Yogurt
- Bagels and cream cheese
- Veggie sticks, cheese
- Popcorn

HOLIDAY/CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS We will have many classroom celebrations during the year and parents will be invited to attend. Occasionally, we will allow modest amounts of sugar to be served at these celebrations.

City of Mountain View Preschool Programs: 2023-2024 Tot Time, Playschool, and Nature Playschool School Year Calendar of Holidays and No School Days.

September 5- Classes begin.

November 10- Veteran's Day (Holiday)

November 22-26- Thanksgiving Holiday-Recess

December 25-January 7- Holiday /Winter Recess

January 8- Classes Resume

January 15- Martin Luther King. Jr. Day Holiday

February 19- President's Day

April 8-12- Spring recess

May 27- Memorial Day Holiday

May 31: Last Day of Classes

City of Mountain View Preschool Parent/Guardian Information Packet Acknowledgment Form



Child's Name: _____

I, _____, the parent/guardian
of _____ have read and understand the Parent
Information Packet and agree to abide by the policies and procedures.

Signature _____

Date _____

Please sign and return this form.