

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

Children's Treehouse  
Learning Center



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# WELCOME TO CHILDREN'S TREEHOUSE LEARNING CENTER

## MISSION STATEMENT

Children's Treehouse Learning Center provides a safe, developmentally appropriate environment for children. We hope to foster a love of learning in each of our students by creating daily educational experiences that encourage curiosity, problem solving and social interactions. Children's Treehouse is also passionate about being a united body of teachers, parents and caregivers supporting each other to ensure the needs of our children and community are being served.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

Children's Treehouse Learning Center has been developed to meet the physical, mental, emotional, social, and creative needs of the young child. The classroom environment encourages trust and independence. Emphasis is on helping the child gain a positive self-concept, self-discipline, and help in developing warm relationships with others.

Early childhood research shows that young children learn primarily through play. Play is an essential part of childhood. It offers the freedom children need to try out new ideas, practice developing skills, and imitate adult roles. It allows children to learn social skills and develop friendships.

Children are knowledge builders. They apply what they have already learned to different situations. Exploring, discovering, questioning, and guessing are important activities. "Readiness" skills are developed through play, and concepts are formed. Children gain a sense of mastery through their activities. They become the active decision-makers in their own scenarios. Our school promotes the development of the whole child through play.

Activities in the classroom reflect our commitment to provide a developmentally appropriate experience for all children. The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (NAEYC), is a strong advocate for developmentally appropriate practices and activities for young children.

We believe that children learn through active hands on involvement with materials, equipment, and activities. During active play, a child's mind, body, and emotions develop, and true learning takes place. We encourage children to be independent in basic care routines because these routines can provide as much opportunity for meaningful learning to occur as experiences planned in the interest areas of the classroom. Our goal is to provide a stimulating, sensitive environment that supports the child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth.

Children learn how to form positive, caring, cooperative relationships by interacting with children and adults. Through these interactions, children learn to get along with others. When a child experiences success in play and is encouraged to make choices, communicate thoughts and feelings in a positive way, and accept

responsibility for actions, the child learns social skills that will last a lifetime. Early childhood play experiences effect learning and personal growth throughout life. Our objective is to assist families in the task of providing a strong foundation for their child's future development.

## **School Policies**

### **DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION**

The school is open year-round from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please refer annually to the School Closing Schedule for a complete list of all designated holidays and in-service training days for teachers that the school is closed.

### **PROGRAMS & AGES**

We offer full time care for children 6 weeks through pre-kindergarten. Part-time programs are available for some age groups as a Monday, Wednesday, Friday or a Tuesday, Thursday schedule.

### **REQUIRED ARRIVAL TIME**

We require all children to be in attendance by 10:00am each day to insure a smoother day for them and the classroom as a whole. Dropping off or picking up at naptime is disruptive and therefore not allowed. Exceptions may be made if you have a doctor's note stating the time of an appointment that kept your child out of our care before that time. Please communicate any scheduling differences with the director.

### **VACATIONS**

All full-time children will be awarded a one-week "vacation" after one year of enrollment has been accrued. Vacations will be granted the day after your one-year anniversary date. Vacations must be used in one-week intervals before the next anniversary date. Your child may not attend the center during his/her vacation week. Vacations cannot be carried over to the next year. Please notify the director in writing one week prior to your free "vacation week".

## **DISCIPLINE**

The goal of Children's Treehouse Learning Center is to help develop self-discipline, encouraging adaptation to acceptable standards of behavior from inner motivation rather than from external controls. Discipline emphasizes limits and rules that are understandable and consistent.

Teachers are expected to try to prevent problems before they arise by arranging programs and classrooms that meet the developmental needs of the children. Examples include having a wide selection of activities, arranging classrooms so that children can be as independent as possible, offering a daily schedule that balances the need for physical activity and rest, and allowing children the choice of challenging activities suited to their developmental level.

Discipline is caring control. When correction is necessary, teachers will use a kind, firm voice to redirect or restate the rule. No physical or harsh verbal discipline of children is allowed. The tone of our school environment is respect. Teachers model and encourage respect for each other, the children, and the environment. We do not allow children to hurt others, themselves, or to damage the classroom materials. Children whose behavior endangers others are supervised away from the situation until they are ready to rejoin the group in a more socially acceptable manner. Teachers facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation, and self-control in children.

For infants and toddlers, redirection is used to distract the child away from an activity that is not desired by attracting the child with a better choice. Since infants and toddlers have short attention spans and are naturally active a toy or item may be placed in "time-out" but not the child.

## **ENROLLMENT**

The items below are required PRIOR to your child's first day at the school.

Completed enrollment packet, which includes the following:

- Nonrefundable registration fee of \$100.00 is due each August for each child and is pro-rated when enrolling
- Health Assessment signed by a licensed physician
- Current Immunization Records
- Enrollment Form
- Enrollment Confirmation Agreement
- Family/Child Information Sheets
- Medical Information & Emergency Release Form

## **DISMISSAL**

Delinquent payments – Parents who have been delinquent in payments three times in an academic year may lose their child's place at CTLC.

Failure to provide or renew your child's medical statement and immunization record can be cause for dismissal. Both forms are required for our State license.

Lack of cooperation with the school's efforts to resolve differences or to address behavioral issues disruptive to normal class functioning.

Abusive behavior and/or verbal threats toward children, staff or other parents are reasons for dismissal are at the discretion of the director.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

We welcome families from all ethnic, racial, religious, and national backgrounds. We do not discriminate based on background, race, creed, or gender. Parents and children can expect to be treated fairly and equally. Children with special needs are welcome at the school if we feel they are a good fit for our program and we can meet all of their needs. We are committed to doing our best to meet each child's individual needs.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

The school accepts all children that may benefit from the group experiences provided here. The school reserves the right to determine whether or not any particular child will benefit from the program and whether the program can be adapted to meet a child's needs. Enrolled children who are identified as having special needs may be referred to community services. The school assumes no responsibility for the costs associated with these referrals.

## **NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL**

The school requires a two (2) week written notice of your intent to withdraw your child from the school. If we do not receive this notice, tuition will be automatically charged. Parents will be responsible for all associated legal and collection agency fees in addition to the past due amount on the account. Please see appendix 5 for our withdrawal policy for our kindergarten enrollee and school age summer camp program.

## **NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES**

Parents are expected to notify the school immediately and in writing of any changes in name, address, employment location and/or phone numbers so they can be contacted in the event of an emergency. In the event your child's physician changes, this information must also be provided to the school as soon as possible.

## **VISITORS' POLICY**

All visitors must sign in and out at the reception desk. Visitors must list name, address, time of visit, purpose of visit, and present identification to school staff.

# **Tuition and Fees**

## **TUITION/SCHOOL CLOSING SCHEDULE**

Tuition is computed to allow for periods when the school is closed. This includes holidays and staff in-service training days. This total amount is then divided into equal monthly payments due on the first of each month or may be paid semi-monthly on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. (If the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a Saturday payments will be deducted the Friday before. If the 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of the month falls on a Sunday payments will be deducted the Monday after.) This means that the total amount is payable each month regardless of the child's attendance or time when the program is closed. For example, a full payment is due in December even though the school is closed for three days for winter break.

## **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Tuition may be paid by electronic funds transfer (a \$30 fee is assessed on any returned ACH payments), debit card or credit card. We do not accept cash or checks.

## **LATE FEES**

Payment is due by the first day of each month or may be paid semi-monthly on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Tuition must be received by the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month and/or by the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month (if semi-monthly) or a \$30 late fee will be assessed. If payment has not been received by the 3<sup>rd</sup> and/or the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month a child's enrollment will be suspended until account is made current. After five business days of non-payment your child's enrollment reservation will not be held.

## **REGISTRATION**

An annual registration fee of \$125 per child is due each August. Fees will be pro-rated from the start month. Registration fees are non-refundable.

## **LATE PICK UP**

Children's Treehouse Learning Center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Please allow time to gather belongings and/or talk to the teachers before 6:00. A grace period of five minutes will be given. Beginning at 6:05 p.m. a late fee will be imposed as follows:

One minute to 10 minutes: \$10

Over 10 minutes: \$1.00 each additional minute

The late charge will appear on your next bill and will be due with your monthly tuition payment. If you are having someone else pick your child up from the school and he/she is late, you are still responsible for the late charges. Please inform any persons you have authorized to pick up your child of the policy. If your child is not picked up within an hour of closing, Social Services will be called.

Chronic late payments on tuition accounts will be grounds for dismissal.

## **Daily Routines**

### **DAILY CHECK IN AND CHECK OUT**

Parents must bring children into their classroom each morning and must come into the classroom to pick up children in the evening. Children must be clocked in and out by parents, using the monitor located at the front entry. Children will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone except the persons designated on the enrollment form unless the director has been notified in advance. Anyone who does not have an access code into the building will be asked to show their identification at the reception desk.

In order to keep track of the children at all times the teacher will take a head count upon leaving the classroom and upon returning.

Parents must ensure that teachers are aware of the child's arrival and departure. Children are never to be left alone in the classroom.

If the child is to be late or absent for any reason, the school should be notified.



## **BUILDING INGRESS AND EGRESS**

Staff, parents and children must enter through the front door. Staff and parents must not hold the door open for other staff or parents. Each parent or visitor will be admitted from the front foyer into the School on an individual basis by the director or a designated staff member. Once they enter the interior of the School, the parent or visitor must close the door behind them; this is the only way we can prevent unauthorized entry. For the safety of our children and our equipment we ask that you do not allow children to touch the check in/out computer screen or teach them how to hold their hands in front of the door sensors. These actions create a mixed message to our students.

## **DROP OFF**

Difficulty with separation is not unusual for children (see appendix 4), especially during their first weeks of attendance. Please help prepare your child for your departure. Do not try to “sneak away” or “slip out” as this action creates anxiety for your child. Tell your child that it is time for you to go, then leave. Prolonging your good-byes sends a mixed message to your child and can increase anxiety. A teacher will be happy to assist you if necessary and help your child settle into an activity. If a child is upset when you leave, please know that children usually calm down and are participating before a parent reaches the parking lot. Please feel free to call at any time to check on your child.

## **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN:**

Please do not allow your children to run ahead of you to the front entrance of the building when you pick up. This is a fairly high-traffic area with many parents arriving to pick up children and we do not want young children running out of the building unattended or into the parking lot.

Please keep children close to you in the parking lot; this is especially important at busy drop-off and pick-up times. Remember the road is extremely busy and close to the parking area.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE OVERVIEW**

Breakfast: Varies by classroom and is served between 7:30 a.m. and 8:50 a.m.

Curriculum: Planned activities begin at 9:00 a.m.

Lunch: Transition into lunch begins 11:00 and most rooms are finished with lunch between 12:15 and 12:50 p.m.

Naptime: Lights out begins at 12:15 / lights on at 2:15 p.m.

Snack time: Varies by classroom, but generally between 3:15 and 3:45 p.m.

Curriculum: Planned activities occur until closure (6:30 p.m.)

Outdoor play and transitional activities vary by classroom. Each classroom is required to post and follow a daily schedule. Parents can review the daily schedule, lessons plans and calendar posted in each classroom.

Naptime begins at approximately 12:15 for toddlers and 1:00 for preschoolers and pre-kindergarten, and concludes at 2:15. Rest time is an essential part of our program. All children are required to rest on their mats/cots for at least thirty (30) minutes, after which children who are not sleeping are given quiet activities at the teacher's discretion. Dropping off or picking up your child at nap time is discouraged.

## **MEALS**

Tuition includes the following meals:

Breakfast snack: milk, fruit, and grain

Lunch: milk, meat and meat alternative, two vegetables and/or two fruits, and a grain

Mid-afternoon snack: two of the following - meat or meat alternative, fruit or vegetable, or grain

Lunches are prepared on-site by our own cook. When planning menus, we strive to provide healthy and diverse food choices. Lunch is served family-style: children are given small portions, and second helpings are available. Teachers sit and converse with the children. The children are encouraged to serve themselves and to try new foods. Menus are posted in the center and on our website. Weekly copies are available to all parents.

If a child's diet must be modified for health reasons, a physician's written explanation is required. If a child's diet is modified for cultural or religious reasons, the parent is asked to put the request in writing, and will be asked to help provide supplemental foods. We do our best to provide quality meals based on the choices offered to us. Please be aware that if your child has special dietary needs that you will need to supplement with food from home to meet the requirements for a well-rounded meal. We do provide some non-dairy menu items. Supplemental foods or meals must mimic our menu items for the day and be packed each day in a labeled and chilled lunchbox that will remain in their cubby throughout the day. Lunchboxes will go home each day.

## **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor activities provide an extension of our learning environment. With the exception of days of excessive heat or cold all classes spend a portion of the day outside. If you feel your child is not well enough to participate in outdoor time then

he/she is probably not well enough to be at school. Please make sure your child has appropriate clothes in order to be comfortable in the changing weather conditions. Before children go outside teachers do a daily playground safety check. Classroom ratios are maintained outside.

If you choose to provide sunscreen we ask for the parent to apply it in the morning and we will re-apply for afternoon outdoor time from Memorial Day through Labor Day. We ask that all sunscreen be in a lotion format, no sprays allowed.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

On occasion, older classrooms may go on a field trip. Whenever a field trip is planned, parents will receive notice in advance specifying the date, destination and departure time, approximate time the children are due back at the school, and any fee required. This information will also be posted on the communication board in the child's classroom the day of the field trip. Parents are welcome to join in field trips when their schedules allow.

If a family arrives at the school after the class has already left for the field trip, the parent is responsible for taking care of their child until the classroom returns. Teacher-child ratios are maintained at all times, and parent volunteers are sometimes asked to accompany our field trips for extra supervision.

# **INDOOR ACTIVITIES**

## **TELEVISION AND MEDIA**

Television is not used at Children's Treehouse. Educational videos are occasionally used to enhance classroom curriculum for children 2 years and older in our library enrichment program.

## **PARENT/FAMILY COMMUNICATION**

We use email as our primary form of communication with parents. Your child's teacher will email daily a report of their activities, learning experiences and meals. For infants and toddlers these reports will also include diaper changes and bottle feedings.

## **CLOTHING AND OTHER ITEMS**

Each child will be assigned a cubby in his or her classroom. This is a place to store all items brought from home. To avoid lost items, make sure everything is labeled in permanent marker with your child's name. Please bring:

- At least two (2) extra changes of clothes
- Fitted crib sheet and blanket for cots (we supply crib sheets for infant cribs)
- Appropriate clothing for unexpected weather changes (extra layers for warmth)
- Manual toothbrush & travel size toothpaste
- One piece lid water bottle

Please note, although we do our best, items occasionally get lost. Therefore we ask that you not bring items that are important to you

In addition the following items are needed for infants and toddlers:

- Disposable diapers – one week supply
- Baby wipes – one week supply
- Clean bottles with lids
- Formula – one week supply
- Breast Milk - daily
- Baby food and/or cereal – one week supply
- Diaper cream & teething gel (if needed—must have long-term medication form on file)

Things you should not bring to the school:

- Toys
- Food, drinks or gum
- Money in pockets

## **Health Policies**

### **HEALTH ASSESSMENT**

A health assessment signed by an approved health professional is required of all children, along with proof of current immunizations. Because we are a group care provider we do not allow entrance into the program without proper immunizations for any reason.

## **ACCIDENTS**

First aid kits are kept inside the hallway and in our laundry room. All non-emergency accidents including biting (see appendix 2) incidents will be documented on an accident report. It will be given to the parent for their review and signature, at which time the parent can take a copy home. Another copy will be kept in the child's file. Please understand due to confidentiality reasons we cannot disclose names of other children involved in accidents.

## **ALLERGIES**

If your child has allergies, please discuss them in detail with the teacher and director. For food allergies, a written description signed by parent and doctor must be on file and updated every year. The staff of the school will take appropriate precautions. If at any time your child develops an allergy, please let us know immediately. NUT-FREE ZONE: Due to an increase in children with nut allergies, we attempt to be a nut-free zone. Please keep this in mind when providing food substitutes for your child. This includes peanuts as well as tree nuts such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, pine nuts (pinoli), coconut, etc.

## **DAILY HEALTH INSPECTIONS**

For the safety and protection of the children, each classroom will follow the recommendation of the Schools for Disease Control (CDC) by providing each child with a health check prior to his/her entering the group. Each child will be checked for the following:

- Severe coughing
- Breathing difficulties
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye (tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling, discharge, etc.)
- Infected skin patches or a rash accompanied by a fever
- Feverish appearance
- Unusual behavior - crying more than usual, lethargy, generally feeling unwell

Hand washing is an important part of our daily routine and all children and staff are required to wash hands when first entering the school each day.

Parents are expected to have an alternative child care arrangement in place when children are ill. Parents are also expected to promptly (within one hour) pick up their children from the school when any of the conditions above exist.

When a child becomes ill during the school day, we make every effort to reach parents. If after 30 minutes we have not been able to make contact with a parent, we will call the emergency contact listed in the child's file.

## **ILLNESS**

Our goal is to provide child care for well children. Having ill children at the school presents the very real possibility that others can be infected. While we understand that parents need to be at work, we need to enforce this policy to protect all children and staff from unnecessary exposure to **communicable** disease. We follow the guidelines developed by the *American Academy of Pediatrics* and the *American Public Health Association* as well as those outlined by the Johnson County Department of Public Health. Parents who repeatedly fail to follow policies related to keeping children at home when they are ill may be required to withdraw their child from the school.

## **INFECTION CONTROL AND PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Children are encouraged to develop desirable habits of personal hygiene, including washing hands after toileting, diapering, and before and after meals. Eating a variety of nutritious foods is also encouraged. In addition to instructing children in these habits, teachers model the behaviors.

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

When a communicable disease has been introduced into the school, parents will be notified. The school also will report these occurrences to the state and local health departments when required. Parents are urged to notify the school when their child is known to have been exposed to a communicable disease outside the school.

The director may determine that a child who does not appear to be fully recovered from an illness cannot be readmitted to the school without a statement from a physician stating that the child is able to return and participate in the activities of the school, or is no longer infectious.

We reserve the right to refuse care due to illness.

In the case of impetigo, lice, ringworm, pinworms, rashes, chicken pox, thrush, etc. your child must be NON-CONTAGIOUS before returning to the school. See Appendix (1) for more information on infectious diseases.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

When a medical emergency arises, every effort will be made to contact parents, guardians, or an emergency contact. In the event that parents or emergency contacts cannot be reached, the director and/or lead teacher will decide the next step and a call to 911 will be placed. An authorized representative from the school will accompany the child and remain with him/her until parents arrive. Our emergency information form, filled out at the time of enrollment, serves as consent for your child to be transported by ambulance to a local medical facility to receive emergency

care. Children's Treehouse assumes no responsibility for the costs associated with emergency care.

All school staff receives training in CPR, first aid, fire, and tornado procedures. The children practice tornado drills in April, May, June, July, August and September. Fire drills take place monthly throughout the year. We periodically consult with the Lenexa Fire Department to determine further measures needed to provide a safe environment for the children.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Medications will be administered to a child only when the parent has completed and signed the "Short Term or Long Term Medication Authorization" form. This form must accompany the medication or we will not be able to administer the medication to your child. A copy of this form is available from the director.

Parents will be asked to sign a medication authorization form for each prescription given, noting time, amount, and number of days to be given. Non-prescriptive medications must accompany a medication form as well. An office staff member trained to administer medication will do so and note time, date, and amount given on medication form.

Waiver's for all topical medications are signed for upon enrollment. All topical medications including sunscreen or bug spray should be in the form of a lotion and not a spray for the safety of all.

## **MEDICATION STORAGE**

Medication prescribed for an individual child must be kept in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label, which shows the prescription number, date filled, doctor's name, directions for use, and child's name. Medication will be kept in a locked medication cabinet or refrigerator out of the reach of children. Parents need to check expiration dates on medications. We reserve the right to dispose of expired medications.

## **PANDEMIC**

In the event of a pandemic in our area, the children's school may close down for an undetermined amount of time to ensure less spreading of disease. We will follow any requirements issued by the Johnson County Department of Public Health.

## **WHEN A CHILD NEEDS TO STAY AT HOME**

A child's temperature should be normal without medication for 24-hours before the child is brought to the school. If your child has a fever in the evening, he/she should

not be brought to the school in the morning, even if his/her temperature is normal. Fever is defined as 101° F orally (100° F auxiliary) or higher.

If your child vomits two or more times during the night, he/she should not be brought into the school the next day, unless it is certain that the vomiting was not due to an infectious condition.

Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is, increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper until diarrhea stops; blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.

Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye): a child with pinkeye must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to the school.

Rash: body rash, not associated with diapering, heat or allergic reactions, especially with fever or itching; until a healthcare provider has determined these symptoms do not represent a communicable disease.

Sore throat coupled with a fever or swollen neck glands.

Lice, Scabies: Children must not return to childcare until they are free of lice and nits (eggs). Children with scabies can be admitted after treatment.

If your child is unusually tired, pale, shows a lack of appetite, is difficult to wake, confused, or irritable. This is sufficient reason to exclude a child from preschool.

Please note: The director will use his/her best judgment, as well as these guidelines, to determine when to send children home.

## CURRICULUM

### Curriculum Focus

The goals of our school include providing a high-quality early childhood program that promotes physical, emotional, and cognitive development in a caring environment. Our curriculum has its early roots in the cognitively oriented High Scope approach to children's learning. One of the central principles of this constructivist philosophy is children are active learners. It is only through active learning—direct experience with objects, ideas, and interactions with other children and adults that children construct their own knowledge about how things work. The teacher's role is to facilitate, create, and support an environment that sets the stage for active learning—with real, concrete experiences. Children have opportunities to make choices, explore and discover, plan and reflect on their experiences. Our curriculum is based on the understanding that children learn through play. At Children's Treehouse Learning Center each day your child will *read, play, create, explore, sing, discuss, observe, and move.*



Three topics that are particularly important for our teachers to strengthen their programs are: adult-child interaction, classroom layout and materials, and the daily routine.

## **ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION**

Adult-child interaction is the process of working alongside children and communicating with them both verbally and nonverbally to encourage learning. A key strategy for adult-child interaction is sharing control with children. Additional strategies include supporting children's play, using encouragement instead of praise, and taking a problem-solving approach to conflict.

## **CLASSROOM LAYOUT & MATERIALS**

Our classrooms are divided into interest areas stocked with a stimulating range of materials designed for specific types of play, for example, house area, art area, block area, small toy area, reading and writing area. Materials are arranged in consistent places and the shelves are tagged with child-friendly labels so that children can get out and put away materials themselves. The classroom's organization also helps children understand how the world is organized, and concepts like more, less, same, different, large, small, in, out, in front of, etc.

## **THE DAILY ROUTINE**

In our daily routine there is a consistent framework for the day that provides a balanced variety of experiences and learning opportunities. Children engage in both individual and social play, participate in small and large-group activities, assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and exercise their small and large muscles. The most important segment of the daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence in which children make choices about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect upon their activities with adults and other children.

We encourage parents to visit with their child's teacher about classroom daily schedules and activities to ensure that individual needs and early childhood educational goals are met. We also encourage parents to share their talents and interests by taking an active role in the school.

## **A COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM**

Children's Treehouse Learning Centers Curriculum, is a comprehensive curriculum focused on the following eight Learning Domains, which are based on the dimensions of school readiness identified by the National Education Goals Panel. Our curriculum content areas are:

*Approaches to Learning* - Young children approach learning in different ways, each bringing a unique set of attitudes, habits, and preferences to their interactions and explorations. By understanding how to support this area of early development, adults can foster children's creativity, curiosity, confidence, independence, initiative,

and persistence as they carry out their intentions, solve problems, and engage in a variety of learning experiences.

*Social and Emotional Development* - Creating a warm and nurturing environment in preschool not only helps children form trusting relationships with others but also promotes learning in all areas. Surrounded by our positive and supportive classroom climate, children are more likely to become engaged and motivated learners.

*Physical Development and Health* – Young children are physically active. Our teachers use children's physical actions as a gateway to learning in all areas of the curriculum. They also focus on personal care skills and acquiring habits that foster lifelong health.

*Language, Literacy, and Communication* - The connection between language and literacy is powerful. Our Preschool Curriculum focuses on this connection by providing meaningful language and literacy experiences for children during every part of the daily routine.

*Mathematics* - As young children explore their environment, they are beginning to notice relationships that are the foundations for mathematics. They can sort and match things that are the same or different; they can also arrange things in simple patterns, based on their characteristics; they are beginning to understand the meaning of words and phrases like "more," "less," "a lot," and "the same as."

*Creative Arts* – Arts, Music and Movement experiences in preschool not only contribute to children's artistic and creative development but also to a wide range of skills in other areas, including perceptual, cognitive, language, and social skills. Children love to imitate and pretend play through building and art materials and music and movement. Each day your child will *read, play, create, explore, sing, discuss, observe, and move.*

*Science and Technology* - Young children are experimenters and testers from birth. If we observe young children as they explore their world, we will see them using science processes such as observing, classifying, experimenting, predicting, drawing conclusions, and communicating their ideas to others. Our teachers support these processes by providing hands-on materials and multisensory experiences that build on children's discoveries and help them develop the habits of mind and skills associated with scientific thinking.

*Social Studies* - Our classrooms are a perfect setting for acquiring the basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes children need to live as contributing citizens in a complex society. Because young children are concrete thinkers, age-appropriate social studies experiences start with children's own lives and help them relate new learning to what is familiar. After their family, the classroom is the first society that young children belong to. For them, early social studies learning grows from their interactions with the people and materials in the preschool setting.

While learning in these domain areas prepares children for later schooling, Children's Treehouse Learning Center takes the learning process beyond traditional academic subjects by applying methods that promote independence, curiosity,

decision making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem solving in young children.

## **THEME BASED TOPICS OF LEARNING**

Our curriculum revolves around theme-based topics of learning. The child-related themes such as At the Zoo, Big Blue Sea, or Backyard Science provide a meaningful context for learning and foster a cohesiveness of learning throughout our school.

Your child explores these interesting topics through reading and technology. Your child writes about facts that he learns, creates related art projects, sings theme-related songs, and pretends with creative movement and free play.

The weekly themes provide the “glue” that joins the learning domains of our well balanced curriculum.

## **PLAY**

Play is the core or the “hub” of all early childhood activity. Children need to play with real objects rather than worksheets to form conceptual understandings about things in their world. Children need to move as they learn. Carefully prepared learning centers in the classroom help children interact actively with equipment, materials and supplies. Meaningful learning occurs when children are engaged in activities that support their growth and development in appropriate ways. Play has been referred to as a “window” to the child’s world. Specially trained staff peek into this window to facilitate the child’s whole development. Teachers engage children in meaningful dialogue that supports the acquisition of learning skills in the developmental areas of physical, social-emotional, language, and in the curriculum contents areas of cognitive development; early literacy, early mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and appreciation for the arts, health and safety, and social studies.

## **CLASSROOMS**

Each classroom has a unique approach to learning based on experiences, strengths, and interests of individual staff as well as the level of development of the children. CTLC is currently composed of ten classrooms: two infant rooms (ranging from 6 weeks to 12 months and walking – ratio 1:3), two toddler rooms (ranging from 12 months and walking to 2 1/2 year olds - ratio 1:5), three preschool classrooms (ranging from 2 to 3 ½ year olds – ratio 1:7/1:10), and three pre-kindergarten rooms (ranging from 3 ½ to 5 year olds – ratio 1:12).

## **PROGRESSION FROM GROUP TO GROUP**

Our goal is to keep children with the same caregivers for as long as possible. The main time for move-ups takes place in early to mid August, when our oldest preschoolers graduate to kindergarten. Some children will move up throughout the year as they reach developmental milestones and or spaces become available. When

teachers and the director agree that a change in classrooms would be desirable, parents will be consulted. Before a child's classroom assignment is changed, the child will be given opportunities to visit and become comfortable with the new children and new teachers. A lot goes into consideration when planning for a move. Examples include the child's age, length of stay in the current room, demonstration of readiness for the next level, and the timing. We usually try to avoid a move when the child has experienced a big change such as a new sibling, moving homes, etc. Families preparing for kindergarten will be given information from the areas public schools.

## **STAFF**

The most important component of a preschool program is its staff. Children's Treehouse staff is comprised of a professional team of individuals who share one common goal: the nurturing, guidance, safety, and education of young children. Most of our staff members have college degrees, many of which are in early childhood education or a related field. When hiring teaching staff, we make every effort to hire the most qualified candidates available. We also encourage and provide ongoing training opportunities for our staff.

The staff is carefully chosen to provide the best care and consistency for your children. All classrooms undergo yearly evaluations by the director and participating parents to determine the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and families. To further enrich the teaching experience, each staff member is required to complete sixteen hours of annual training as well as attending all staff in-service trainings. All of our staff members are certified in Pediatric CPR and First Aid & all KDHE Health & Safety Courses.

## **CONFERENCES**

A conference, to report on your child's progress, is held with your child's teacher in the fall and spring semesters. The teacher and the parent/guardian will discuss growth and development of the child so that they can work together toward meeting these goals. However, if you have any concern at any time, please contact your child's teacher or the director to schedule a conference appointment. Children's Treehouse staff may also initiate a conference should the need arise.

# **COMMUNICATION**

## **ACCESS**

Parents are permitted access at any time their child is in attendance at the school. Making an appointment is not necessary. However, we expect that you will take into consideration the children's daily schedule before interrupting activities.

## **APPOINTMENTS AND PHONE CALLS**

Please make an appointment if you need to speak with a teacher or the director to ensure uninterrupted time is scheduled for you. We try to keep classroom interruptions to a minimum so if you need to speak with a teacher immediately, please let the office know the nature of your phone call so that we can get you in touch with your child's teacher as soon as possible.

## **CUSTODY**

Persons identified as parents on a child's enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up that child. If a court has issued an order limiting or restricting access of a parent to a child, a court stamped copy of such an order must be submitted to the director and revised copies of both emergency and registration forms must be completed before we can restrict a parent's access from his/her child.

## **FEEDBACK AND INVOLVEMENT**

We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with a teacher or director, whenever questions or problems arise. We encourage parental involvement with the school by:

- Inviting parents to participate in social activities held by the school
- Inviting parents to visit the school and share skills/interests with children
- Inviting parents to accompany us on field trips when possible
- Providing the opportunity to participate in parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's developmental progress
- Community events pertaining to children and families will be posted in the entrance of the school. School reminders will be written on the parent board

You will find parent notices in your individual mailbox. These pertain to administrative and school events. We urge you to read them as well as all newsletters. In this way you will keep current on our school's happenings.

Please keep us informed of special circumstances in your family that may be upsetting to your child. We can help a child deal with his or her worries and fears with marital problems, a death in the family, changes in living situations, etc. if we know that this is happening. If you have questions, problems, concerns, or suggestions please feel free to approach the director or your child's teacher. We are here to help and we do have access to referral or resource information that you may need.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

All personal matters, such as concerns regarding children, parent or staff relationships, should be raised directly with the school through the director or staff. The usual procedure to be followed is:

Make an appointment to talk with the person who knows about the situation (e.g. the teacher or the director). When possible, always start with the person who is directly concerned. Often, the situation can be resolved if the two people sit down together and talk openly and honestly about the situation.

Sometimes meeting together does not work. If together you are unable to resolve the problem, let the person know you will need to speak to the director. Make an appointment to speak to the director, making sure you provide information which will allow the meeting to be as productive as possible.

If, at the end of this meeting, the problem is still unresolved, you may want to contact the owner. Whenever possible, confidentiality will be maintained.

## **RELEASE AUTHORIZATION**

Children will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone other than those people listed on the enrollment form. Please inform those authorized to pick up your child that picture identification will be required until they have been set up in our system with their fingerprint. In emergencies, permission may be given over the phone for an alternate pick up person.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Maintaining confidentiality about each child is legally required and must always be respected. We are prohibited from disclosing a child's health, behavior, home situation, or other personal information to another parent or third party. We do not discuss a particular child in front of other children or third parties. If we are seeking advice from a professional, we do not refer to the child by name, but instead, refer to her/him as "a child in my class."

In addition, we are also prohibited from disclosing personal information and internal personal matters about individual staff members to parents or other third parties.

Children's records are considered confidential and will only be viewed by the following personnel associated with the program:

- Classroom staff
- Administrative staff
- Licensing agency
- Public Health Department (medical and immunization records)
- Professional consultant (with parent permission only)

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **BIRTHDAY POLICY**

Birthdays are very special for young children, and we want to recognize that day. However, we ask that the celebration remain low-key and any birthday treats being brought in to share with the class be some form of a non-food item. Examples of this might be some form of a party favor such as sunglasses, party hats, stickers, etc (no balloons please). Another option might be donating or bringing in an item to be shared by the whole class such as a special book to be read during group time.

If you are planning a home party, invitations may not be handed out at school unless all children in the class are invited.

### **CHILD ABUSE AND RELATED ISSUES**

If your child has sustained any physical injuries (bruises, cuts, burns, etc.) please bring this to the director or teacher's attention. We are required to report any incidence of physical or emotional injury or neglect. All professional school personnel at Children's Treehouse are mandatory reporters. We are required to report to the hotline of Child Protective Services when it appears that there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been: non-accidentally physically or mentally injured, negligently treated or maltreated, or sexually abused. The law also states that any person who in good faith makes a report or gives testimony in regard to possible non-accidental injury or neglect is immune to possible civil or criminal suit.

If there is any reason to question whether or not an incident, circumstance, or concern should be reported, it categorically should.

### **HOLIDAY POLICY**

The children's school is a reflection of the families enrolled. Our goal is to bring each child's culture, traditions, celebrations, and interests into our school so that each child feels accepted and gains a sense of belonging. We recognize that our families do not celebrate holidays in the same manner. We desire to remain respectful and neutral when planning activities for the children. We invite and encourage parents to visit the older classrooms and share a family holiday tradition with the children. We believe our children benefit greatly by knowing how other families celebrate the holiday season. Depending on the ages of the children in the class, it may be appropriate to engage them in a cooking activity, share family pictures, create a special art project, or read a special book. Here are some suggestions of how to share your traditions with us so that our environment is truly representative of you: perhaps you would like to bring in literature or music, traditional holiday food items to share, or pictures from your home country.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Children's Treehouse will have a 2-hour delayed opening if Shawnee Mission School District is closed. We reserve the right to close due to severe weather conditions. An email notification will be sent out and information posted on our voice messaging system by 7:00am if the school will be closed all day. The safety of children and staff are considered when closing decisions are made.

# **DISASTER EVACUATION PLAN**

## **TORNADOS**

Tornado drills are practiced seasonally. Johnson County alerts us to dangerous weather concerns. Children will be moved to the school's inner hallways and multi-purpose room away from all flying debris. When a safe condition exists, efforts will be made to contact parents.

## **FIRE / FLOOD / CHEMICAL SPILL**

Fire drills are conducted each month to help children practice what to do in case of an actual fire. All staff and children exit the building according to planned evacuation routes (posted in all classrooms). The teacher does a head count and compares to daily attendance sheets. The director checks all classrooms, bathrooms, the kitchen, and other areas to ensure thorough evacuation.

In the event that Children's Treehouse is determined to be temporarily unsafe, such as after a fire, chemical spill or flood, parents will need to make other arrangements for child care.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

When a medical emergency arises, every effort will be made to contact parents, guardians, or an emergency contact. In the event that parents or emergency contacts cannot be reached, the director and/or lead teacher will decide the next step and a call to 911 will be placed. An authorized representative from the school will accompany the child and remain with him/her until parents arrive. Our emergency information form, filled out at the time of enrollment, serves as consent for your child to be transported by ambulance to a local medical facility to receive emergency care. Children's Treehouse assumes no responsibility for the costs associated with emergency care.

## **LOSS OF HEATING OR COOLING**

The owner or director will determine length of outage by contacting the utility and/or service provider. Parents will be notified of the situation and may be asked to come and pick up their child to ensure safety. However, the parent is required to pick up their child when there is a loss of heating or cooling for more than a (3) three-hour period.



If loss of heating occurs, staff will dress children in additional layers of clothing and use blankets and coats for warmth. If loss of heating is lengthy enough to result in a temperature lower than 65 degrees, or if loss of cooling occurs lengthy enough to result in a temperature higher than 85 degrees, the parent will be notified to come and pick up their child. If the parent is prevented in reaching the facility to pick up their child, staff members will care for the child and maintain proper staff/child ratios until such time the parent can reach the facility to pick up their child.

## **LOSS OF WATER**

If loss of water service is longer than one hour, bottled water will be used for drinking, hand washing and flushing of toilets. Parents may be contacted to pick up their child. However, the parent is required to pick up their child when there is loss of water for more than a (3) hour period.

## **POTTY TRAINING**

Our goal is for children to be potty trained (with the exception of nap time) by the time they are 3 years of age. We will work with you to accomplish this while they are in our 2 year old classrooms (see appendix 3). For sanitary reasons potty training must be done in pull-ups until a child has remained accident free for a period of two weeks with only one accident during that two week period.

## **INFORMATION DISSEMINATION**

All efforts will be made to provide parents with the most timely and accurate information on issues regarding program quality, as well as events and circumstances which affect the safety and welfare of their children.

Events which require different forms of notification:

- The suspected abuse of a student by school staff, as identified by anyone
- The investigation of alleged abuse by school staff, under investigation by Lenexa police or Johnson County Social Services
- The arrest or summons of school personnel associated with allegations of abuse or failure to report abuse
- Personnel no longer employed at the school
- Personnel hired by the school
- Personnel responsibility changes
- Teacher assignment or schedule changes
- Costs: changes in current rates, proposed changes, exceptions to rate structure
- Staff members placed on administrative leave

Notification of these items will be done through written memo as well as email notification. If a situation necessitates public meetings, these will be scheduled as

soon as possible to ensure that all parents are fully informed. If it is determined that a circumstance or event affects the safety and welfare of the children, all attempts will be made to contact affected parents of children who are not currently attending the school, to inform them of these events.

## **MISSING/LOST CHILDREN**

Staff members will notify the director immediately when it is suspected that a child may be missing. Staff will look for the child for five minutes. If the child is not located, 911 will be called. After the police have been notified, the parents will be notified of the situation.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES**

Children's Treehouse will arrange an opportunity to have class and/or individual pictures taken by a professional photographer. Purchase of photos is optional. Usually, individual pictures are taken in the fall and again in the spring.

## **SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY**

All staff members are trained to be observant and aware of their surroundings. Any suspicious persons or activities will be reported to the director immediately.

## APPENDIX (1): MORE ABOUT INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Bronchitis	<p><u>Signs and Symptoms:</u> Coughing and breathing difficulties</p> <p><u>Communicability:</u> By contact with germs from saliva, mucus, or the tears of an infected person.</p> <p><u>When to Return:</u> When well enough to participate in program activities.</p>
Chicken Pox	<p><u>Signs and Symptoms:</u> A mild fever and itchy rash that starts as pink bumps that turn into blisters and finally into scabs.</p> <p><u>Communicability:</u> By close contact or from airborne droplets from one to two days before, and until about five days after the rash appears. New cases can appear up to 20 days after contact.</p> <p><u>When to Return:</u> Not until the sixth day after the rash starts.</p>
Colds	<p><u>Signs and Symptoms:</u> Sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, cough, watery or irritated eyes, headache, and crankiness - sometimes a fever.</p> <p><u>Communicability:</u> By contact with germs from the saliva or mucus of an infected person, from one to two days before symptoms appear until several days after symptoms appear.</p> <p><u>When to Return:</u> When well enough to participate in program activities.</p>
Ear Infections (Otitis)	<p><u>Signs and Symptoms:</u> Earache, pulling at the ear, unusual crankiness, difficulty in hearing, or funny sensations in the ear caused by a mucus backup in the middle ear.</p> <p><u>Communicability:</u> Not contagious.</p> <p><u>When to Return:</u> When well enough to participate in program activities.</p>
Fifth Disease	<p><u>Signs and Symptoms:</u> A distinctive rash beginning on the face that makes the child appear to have very red cheeks. After one to four days a rash appears on the arms and moves to the trunk, buttocks, and thighs. The body rash may come and go for one to three weeks, usually appearing when the child is hot.</p> <p><u>Communicability:</u> 50% of exposed children will come down with the rash 10-14 days afterwards.</p> <p><u>When to Return:</u> Because this disease is mainly contagious during the week before the rash begins, a child who has the rash is no longer contagious and does not need to stay home from school.</p>
Hepatitis A	<p><u>Signs and Symptoms:</u> Fever, weakness, loss of appetite, nausea, dark urine, and yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes.</p> <p><u>Communicability:</u> Contact with virus infected food, stool, water, or environment. The virus is shed for up to three weeks, starting two weeks before symptoms appear. The illness may occur up to 50 days after contact.</p> <p><u>When to Return:</u> One week after the illness starts and when the fever is gone.</p>

## APPENDIX (2): WHY YOUNG CHILDREN BITE

Biting is fairly common among young children and can be a very painful and frightening experience for the child who is bitten. Biting can make the child who bites feel very powerful because of the strong reaction that it brings. This feeling of power can also be frightening for children because they need to feel secure that their feelings can be controlled. There are generally four kinds of biting:

**Experimental:** Biting can be an exploratory action, especially for younger children. At some stage many infants will try biting while they feed or biting a parent/caregiver. It can even become a game for the child, so do not let the child see that you think it is funny or a game. Firmly say, "No, biting hurts" and remove them quickly from the arm or part they are biting. Toddlers usually soon learn not to bite in this situation. When children teethe they bite on things often to relieve sore gums; in this instance, safe teething items help.

**Frustration:** Children under the age of three are usually not ready to play in a cooperative way with other children in groups. If they are in a group and another child takes their toy, they may respond by hitting or biting. Not having developed the communication or coping skills necessary to properly react to a situation, when biting gets a strong response, they will see that it is successful and may try it again. Keeping group play to short periods and small groups can help minimize frustration. You can help children begin to manage their feelings by talking about them and showing them that their frustrations are understood.

**Powerlessness:** Oftentimes, it is the youngest child in the family who bites. The older child, being stronger and better able to communicate their needs, leaves the younger child feeling small and powerless. The same can happen in groups. The child then discovers that biting can be a way of gaining power in a situation. In a group situation, it is best to try to explain to older children how the younger child may be feeling in order to attain a better level of equality in the group. When biting does happen, more adult help is necessary. Try to get in first and make sure that the needs of the less powerful child are taken care of. Once the child has bitten, quickly tell her/him that she/he is not to bite and remove them from the situation, keeping them with you for a while before allowing them to return to the group.

**Stress:** Biting often occurs when a child is under emotional stress that she/he cannot handle. This biting is an expression of distress or pain and the child may seem very upset or angry. Young children are not easily able to know what they are feeling; they just act. Try to find out what is causing the stress in a situation if you can. Keep watch on the child when the biting happens and what is happening just before. For example, a child may bite another when a new child arrives in a playgroup and takes the group leader's attention. Or a child may start biting soon after a beloved grandparent dies. Although it isn't always possible to remove the cause of the stress, by coming to understand what triggers the biting in this situation you can help the child find other ways to express her/his feelings through play and stories. When the child bites, remove her/him from the situation and offer comfort as you can.

## APPENDIX (3): TOILET TRAINING

We encourage younger toddlers to "practice" toilet training by having them sit on the potty to get used to it. Older toddlers will sit on the potty at regular intervals throughout the day. Once we have started the toilet training we would like to be consistent between home and school. Once the child has started with underwear at school, she/he should wear underwear at home as well. During this important time we ask you to supply appropriate clothing, which will allow your child to use the toilet easily. Please no belts, overalls, or "onesies." For ease of potty training bring velcro pull ups.

### READINESS

Can your child...  
follow simple directions?  
remain dry at least two hours at a time during the day?  
walk to the bathroom, pull down and pull up her/his pants?

Does she/he...  
remain dry during naptime?  
seem uncomfortable with soiled or wet diapers?  
show interest in the toilet or potty chair?  
have regular/predictable bowel movements?  
ask to wear grown-up underwear?

If you answered "yes" to most of the questions, you may want to introduce your child to toilet training at home. If you answered "no" to most of the questions, you may want to wait a while longer. Starting too soon can cause frustration and may actually delay learning.

Some parents find it helpful to establish routines by putting a child on the toilet (regardless of whether they use it) a few minutes after she/he gets up in the morning, before and/or after naps, after meals, and before bedtime. If you are anticipating major life events in your home (i.e. new baby, relocation, etc.) you may want to postpone training for a later date. Toilet training is easiest when both parent(s) and child can give it their full attention.

It is alright to keep your child in diapers or "Pull-Ups" for sleeping. Nighttime control generally comes many months after daytime control.

Treat accidents casually. Give your child support by keeping a positive, upbeat attitude.

## **APPENDIX (4): SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Children that are experiencing separation anxiety react in several ways: crying, screaming, clinging to the parent, and/or refusing to go to the caregiver. Once the parent leaves, the child will cry for approximated 5-10 minutes and then stop. After a few more minutes the child will start to engage in various activities in the classroom. The child usually takes comfort from the caregiver once the parent leaves.

Tips on helping children cope with separation anxiety:

Establish a nighttime routine. Make sure your child goes to bed at a decent time so they will not be too tired to get up the next morning.

Wake your child each morning at the same time. Give yourself and your child enough time to get ready and reduce the possibility of a stressful environment.

Take a few minutes to pick out a storybook and read to your child before leaving the house. Enjoy spending a few minutes together to help settle your child.

Be upbeat about going to school. Talk about a favorite teacher, friends, and activities that may be going on that day.

Once you arrive at the school, spend a minute or two talking to your child's teacher. Warm and friendly interaction between parents and teachers demonstrates to a child that you trust the people caring for her/him. Many times teachers will assist in saying goodbye by walking with the child to the door. Then teachers will try to direct and encourage children to participate in activities set out for the morning. This helps establish a consistent and repetitive morning routine that a child can depend on each day.

Make sure you don't linger in the classroom. The longer you stay, the harder it becomes for your child. Give your child a kiss and a hug and tell them when you will be back to pick them up.

You are welcome to call and check in on your child after you have dropped her/him off.

## **APPENDIX (5): SUMMER CAMP**

Our Summer Camp program runs during the summer months, each year those dates are specified through a letter. Our summer camp is designed for children entering kindergarten and any school agers that have returned for the summer. If you choose to enroll your child in our summer camp program they must remain enrolled through the entire summer and cannot disenroll early. A two weeks notice will not be acceptable during our summer camp program.