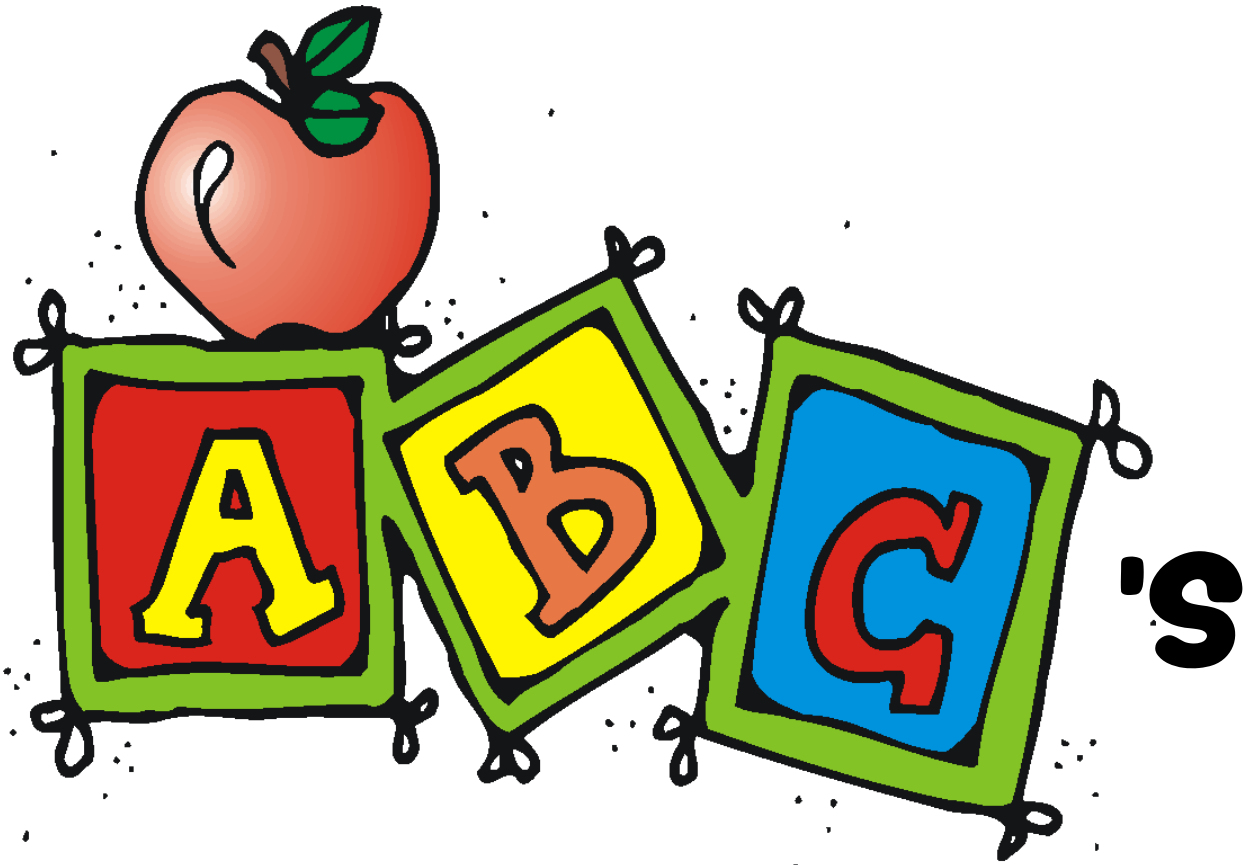


The



of Preschool & Pre-K at

The Learning Tree

Welcome Handbook

A

Attendance: Please make every effort to have your child in class. You will see an amazing amount of growth socially and academically this year and ensuring that your child is present will give him or her the opportunity to thrive. If your child will be absent from school, please be sure to let us know as early as possible. This helps teachers plan and prepare for the day.

Assessment: Each child will have their own portfolio with observations, concrete examples, and teacher and student reflections that will show each child's progress, areas of concern, and areas of talent. This assessment gives a whole picture of your child and will help guide instruction to best prepare him or her for kindergarten. There will also be parent/teacher conferences scheduled twice during the year.

B

Backpacks: Please choose a backpack that will fit a folder and change of clothes. Label your child's backpack in an easily visible place. The backpack should include a labeled water bottle and an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothes, including socks and shoes (accidents happen).

Birthdays: Birthdays are special and meant to be celebrated! If you would like to bring in a small treat on your child's birthday to share, you are welcome to do so. We will celebrate birthdays as close to the actual day as possible and on a day that works best for you and the class. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in May so that those students with summer birthdays can have a special day as well. Please let the teacher know in advance what you are planning to bring and to set up the day and time. Our school is nut free, so please be sure to only send items that are safe for everyone.

Birthday Invitations: If you are planning a party for your child and would like to hand out invitations to other students in the class, please give the invites to the teacher to place in children's backpacks. This will limit any feelings getting hurt.

C

Chapel Time: Once a month, students will share a special time in the church's sanctuary for a time of Bible stories, songs, and games. We want kids to know that God made them, God loves them, and Jesus will be their friend forever.

Communication: Feel free to contact us any time!

Heather Hernandez, Director; thelearningtreedirector@offumc.org; 618-589-9040

Patrice Marchese, Apple Tree Lead Teacher; theappletreeclass@offumc.org; 618-589-9040

Peach Tree Lead Teacher; thepeachtreeclass@offumc.org;

Sue Ellen Lay, Cherry Tree/Peach Tree Lead Teacher; c669573@outlook.com; 618-589-9040

Drop-off and pick-up are often busy times for teachers. They are happy to schedule a time to meet with you before or after school if you have questions or concerns.

Curriculum: Learning Tree Preschool strives to nurture your child's talents and interests while preparing them for kindergarten and the future. We are excited to offer an outstanding phonics curriculum called Jolly Phonics. Our math curriculum follows IL Early Learning standards using the 5 disciples of preschool math.

D

Differentiation: Every child is unique and learns in different ways, and each child needs to be challenged in different ways. We differentiate lessons, activities, and themes to spark interest and create an exciting learning environment for every child. We often work in small groups and these groups will change frequently. Your child may have different work than another child but rest assured that everyone is learning the same concepts, just in a way that best fits him or her.

Discipline: Learning Tree Preschool uses the philosophy written by Thomas W. Phelan, PhD and Sarah Jane Schonour, M.A. called 1-2-3 Magic for Teachers. It is an excellent way to teach children self-control, respect, empathy, and positive behavior in school. If you would like to research more on 1-2-3 Magic, there are many resources on the Internet. You can start at 123magic.com. The teachers will communicate with parents regarding any serious or reoccurring behaviors. For the safety of all students and teachers, students exhibiting aggressive behaviors (hitting, kicking, biting, etc.) will be removed from the classroom and parents will be contacted.

Dress Code: We intend to have fun and get a little messy! Please dress your child appropriately in play clothes and provide an extra set of clothes in their backpack in case of spills or accidents. Outside play is important, so we plan to visit the playground whenever the weather allows. We will play outside in the winter when the real feel temperature is 32 degrees or higher, so please be sure to send coats, hats, gloves, and scarves as appropriate. **For safety, close-toed shoes must be worn. Please, no sandals or flip-flops.**

Drop-off and Pick-up: Doors will open at 9:00 a.m. and again at 12:00 p.m. A staff member will be there to say hello and goodbye. If staying for the extended day or lunch enrichment the doors will unlock 15 minutes before the program is done. If doors are not open, please ring the bell on the side of the church.

E

Emergencies: Please ensure two current emergency contact numbers are always on file.

F

Facebook: For the latest updates, please follow The Learning Tree on Facebook at www.facebook.com/offumcpreschool.

Fees and tuition: Monthly tuition is due on the first of each month. A \$10 late fee will be charged each day after the 5th that fees are not paid. If tuition is not paid by the end of the month, the student will not be permitted to return to class the following month. To have tuition directly withdrawn from your bank account, please turn the ACH form to the Administrative Assistant or your child's teacher. If, for some reason, your child won't be finishing the entirety of the school year at The Learning Tree, one month's tuition is due past his/her final date of attendance. This fee may be waived for military families receiving orders. If you ever have concerns about payment, would like to request tuition assistance, or need to establish a payment plan, please contact our director, Heather Hernandez (thelearningtreedirector@offumc.org).

G

Go PMO: Check out our Parents Morning Out program for ages 6 weeks- 5 years. For more information, check out our website at ofallonlearningtree.org.

H

Home Activities: Watch your weekly newsletter and take-home folder for opportunities to extend your child's learning at home.

I

Illness: We want The Learning Tree to be a safe place for your children. This includes protecting them from illness. Your child may not attend school if he/she:

- Has had a fever above 100.4 within the past 24 hours
- Has vomited within the past 24 hours
- Has had diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Has pink eye
- Has head lice
- Has strep throat

Independent Reading: Reading readiness is a focal point of preschool, and your child will be exposed to many different books, computer programs and magazines. Children will be encouraged to explore these every day during class.

Interests: School motivation is linked to having the opportunity to explore personal interests. Our philosophy at The Learning Tree is to home in on the child's interests and natural curiosities to shape and guide our themes and lessons.

J

Jumping: Jumping, running, skipping, kicking, balancing and stretching are all important large motor skills that are a part of the National Preschool Standards. Be assured that your child will practice these important skills every day.

K

Keep: Keep backpacks neat, tidy and prepared. Having your child help pack his/her backpack in the morning and helping to unpack it every night will instill responsibility and independence.

L

Love: Our school centers around the Christian teachings of love. We love one another and we love ourselves. If you have any concerns at all about what is happening in class, please talk to the teachers so that we can work through any issues in a positive way.

Lunch: If your student is signed up for lunch, spend some time showing him/her how to open the packaging. Sending food in easy open packaging not only empowers your child to be self-sufficient, but also decreases the risk on cross-contaminating food. All lunches need to be nut free.

M

Morning Routine: Our morning routine is very important. Please ensure that your child is at school on time and be ready to learn. A quick goodbye is best.

N

Newsletter: Teachers will email a weekly newsletter detailing learning themes, upcoming dates and helpful tips to extend learning from the classroom to home. Please take the time to read it each week.

O

O'Fallon First United Methodist: The Learning Tree families are an important part of our church community. You, your friends, and family are always invited to all events, activities, and groups at the church. Let us know if we can help you find your niche. offumc.org

P

Play: Play is a crucial part of a child's development. Through play, a child learns a multitude of social and academic skills, and a teacher can learn about a child's interests and abilities. These insights give the teacher a different perspective on the child's thought processes and ways to best help the child achieve their potential. Play is an important component to our curriculum.

Preschool Screenings: The Learning Tree works in conjunction with O'Fallon District 90 to evaluate students who qualify for early intervention services. Should your child's teacher feel that an evaluation may be important in meeting your child's needs, you may be asked to schedule a meeting at one of District 90's screenings or a screening may occur during the day at the Learning Tree Preschool if no screenings are close in calendar date. Results of the evaluation will help determine the best placement of the student to meet his or her needs.

Q

Quality Time: Several times throughout the year, we hope to invite families to special events at school. Watch your newsletter for details!

R

3 Rs: Respect, Responsibility and Right Choices will be emphasized this year. Your child will learn what these mean in depth so that behavior expectations are well understood.

S

Schedules and Routines: As we all know, children thrive with structure and routine. Our school day includes lots of play, but you will find that all play is intentional. We have a lot to learn in a relatively short amount of time and following a routine helps us all to take advantage of the time in school in the best possible way.

Snacks: We love to offer kid-friendly snack options for our students. The registration fee paid at the beginning of the school year will cover the cost of snacks. We'll do all the planning and shopping, and each day your child will be served a fresh fruit or vegetable.

Special Needs: At The Learning Tree, we celebrate the individuality of each of our students. We will make all reasonable accommodations in our classrooms to include children of a variety of abilities. In some circumstances, The Learning Tree may not have the resources to provide the proper environment for a child to thrive. With the child's best interest at heart, we will work with parents to identify resources in the community for alternate services.

T

T-Shirts: If you'd like to purchase a shirt, please grab a brochure from the director. Sizes available at Parent Previews.

Toys: Please keep all toys at home. They can be a distraction to the school day and can bring along extra germs that we do not want to share.

U

Unique Children: All children are unique and will learn skills at different rates and through different styles. Please refrain from comparing your child to another and know that your child will work at their own rate.

W

Water Bottle: Please have a labeled water bottle in your child's backpack every day.

Weather: The Learning Tree follows O'Fallon District 90's policies for weather cancellations. If District 90 closes or has E-Learning days, The Learning Tree is closed as well. Follow our Facebook page for further updates.

Well Wishes: It is more difficult for some children than others when they have to say good-bye to their parents. To ease the transition for you and your child, please make your "see you soon" happy, positive and brief.

X,Y,Z

We are e**X**cited to work with you and your child this **Y**ear. Ensure your child gets plenty of **ZZZZZZ**s each night.