

PARENT HANDBOOK



Rooted and Grounded in Jesus Christ

A Ministry of First Baptist Church of Winter Park

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The Learning Tree Philosophy

The Learning Tree is here to partner with the parents in helping your child become a well-rounded individual spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically.

We are first and foremost a Christian faith based school. All of our classes work with a planned curriculum and teaching methods unique to the school. We strive to provide a variety of learning experiences.

At The Learning Tree we want to teach children through their senses of touch, hearing, taste, sight and smell.

Our goal is to provide a safe and stimulating environment for your child as well as take the opportunity to minister to the needs of your family.

INTRODUCTION

On August 29, 1972, The Learning Tree Kindergarten and Childcare began. It was voted in as a Ministry of the First Baptist Church of Winter Park in 1975. The Learning Tree consists of several programs: Preschool, Preschool with Childcare, and Elementary Summer Camp. We introduce children to God and His Son, Jesus Christ, through Bible verses, stories, songs, and small group discussions.

We provide academic learning experiences for all children, infants through Preschool 4's. We strive to provide a variety of learning experiences using a variety of tools and methods. Learning occurs through exploration, problem solving, reasoning and decision making. Our babies thru Preschool 4's use the *Wee Learn* curriculum. In addition, the 4's use *Writing Without Tears* and *ABEKA*.

The enrichment program of The Learning Tree consists of physical education, music, science, Spanish and chapel. As regular parts of their learning, the children are also involved in cooking, library, computers, playground, and classroom centers.

Our 3's and 4's attend chapel every Wednesday starting in August, our 2's start in January. The children enjoy music lead by a staff person and a story or object lesson taught by one of the teachers or staff of F.B.C.W.P. Baptist doctrine is not taught at The Learning Tree, but the truth of the Bible is.

First Baptist Church of Winter Park offers a wide variety of programs designed to meet the needs of our congregation and guests. Each family is always welcome and encouraged to be a part of our church family as you sense a need.

We thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your life and the life of the most precious gift God has given you—your child. We pray that you will be pleased by your experience at The Learning Tree in the days and years to come.

Come join us as we grow in Christ together!

Except the lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Psalm 127:1

TUITION AGREEMENTS

Tuition is due every Monday of the current week for all classes. If payment is not received by the end of the day on Wednesday, a non-negotiable late fee of \$25.00 will be charged to your account. If your account falls two weeks behind, you will receive a withdrawal notice stating that your child may not come back on Monday. You must contact The Learning Tree office to make arrangements in order to return. If circumstances arise and your family is facing a financial hardship, please contact The Learning Tree office to make special arrangements.

If you decide to pay for more than one week at a time, the account must be paid for the current week and the upcoming week.

Parents are required to sign a contract upon registration at The Learning Tree. This contract states payment options. If an account is in arrears, The Learning Tree has the right to remove the child from the school.

If circumstances arise and your family will no longer be attending The Learning Tree, a two week notice in writing is required. If we do not receive a two week notice, you will be charged for the two weeks of tuition regardless. Receipts are given as a proof of childcare expenses and a year-end statement is provided for income tax purposes.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Children ages 6 weeks through 4 years old are eligible for enrollment in The Learning Tree. Enrollment is based on availability of space in accordance with teacher/child ratios. Children are promoted up to the next class according to birthdays and the cut-off date of September 1 of the current year (according to Florida state law). This begins with our Toddlers through our 4's. For example, children must be 2 years old by September 1 to be admitted into a 2 year old class. The same applies to 3's and 4's.

The Learning Tree is licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services and we are required to have the following forms on file:

A. Registration Card

Your registration card includes:

- Child's address
- Parents' current phone numbers (home, cell and work)
- Email address
- Emergency Contact phone numbers
- Who may pick up your child, etc.

Copies are given to the teacher for dismissal purposes. This is the card we go to first in an emergency, so we ask that you fill it out very carefully.

Please notify the office immediately of any changes regarding this information. Remember, no one may pick up your child who is not on the card.

Registration for the next school year occurs in January of each year. Registration fees and material fees will reserve your child's space for the next year. If this is not paid, you will not have a guaranteed spot for your child starting the new school year.

B. Physical Form DH-3040 and Immunization DH 680-Very Important Form

Some doctors make a copy of these forms and provide parents with a white copy of the brown/yellow physical form and blue immunization form. These forms must be completed by a **Florida** physician. All necessary immunizations must be updated on this form periodically according to the date the doctor has filled in. Your child cannot attend school if your form is outdated.

If a family decides not to vaccinate on the recommended schedule, please contact the health department and obtain the necessary form.

C. Childcare Application for Enrollment Form CF-FSP 5219

The form must contain all current information and be signed by a parent or guardian. This is due upon enrollment. Please be sure to record any allergy problems and bring this to the teacher's attention.

The second page must be signed by the parent stating that you received the following:

- Notification regarding requirements of the physical and immunization forms
- A copy of the "Know Your Child Care Facility" brochure
- Notification in writing of our disciplinary practices used here at The Learning Tree

D. Influenza Virus Brochure

Parents are required to read and return a signed copy of the brochure.

E. Parent-Center Agreement Contracts

This is a binding contract. Please read through it entirely. Sign both copies. The parent who has contracted with The Learning Tree has a continuing responsibility to inform the school of the legal status of either or both parents due to separation, divorce or any other subsequent change in that status.

F. Forms for the Infant room, specific to that area of care

OTHER FORMS REQUIRED BY THE SCHOOL

A. Florida Department of Children and Families Accident/Incident Report (HRS-CYS Form 5015)

This form is completed by The Learning Tree staff member in charge of the child at the time of an accident/incident. It is the responsibility of the parent to sign the form and leave it in the classroom or return it to the teacher. This stays at the school and is put into the child's file.

B. Medication Form

This form must be filled out for any over the counter or prescription medication. The form must be properly filled out and signed by the parent as well as the office. Forms are located outside the Director's office.

C. Permission Slip for Field Trips

This form is for our 3's and 4's. A permission slip is given for each field trip.

FACULTY/STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

All employees of The Learning Tree are required to have a full background check by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement as required by the Department of Children and Family Services. In addition, a local law enforcement check is required and a drug test.

All employees are required to receive 45 hours of training in childcare. This training is provided by The Department of Children and Families and other sources offering childcare training.

All employees are required to receive 10 hours of in-service training annually in addition to the initial 45 hours. They must also be up to date with CPR/first aid.

The Learning Tree requires each employee be enrolled in classes throughout the year for early childhood training for continuing education. At The Learning Tree most of our teachers have either a college degree or their C.D.A. We encourage our assistants to obtain their C.D.A's. As of July, 1996, all child care centers will be required to have at least one person with C.D.A. credentials per 20 children.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Effective discipline is guidance. It is a teaching and learning process. The goal of discipline is to help children develop self-discipline.

The Learning Tree uses redirection and positive reinforcement. Through realistic expectations and developmental communication, teachers use effective methods of discipline. If a child does not respond to positive guidance and encouragement, the child is removed from the group for a time away from the classroom in the office.

Problems at home can be reflected in a child's behavior. Keep your teacher informed about events, which may affect behavior. Please remember, even a mild family disagreement might result in behavioral changes such as separation anxiety.

BITING POLICY

2's through 4's:

If a child bites three times in one week, he/she will have to be kept out of school for a day. We will conference with the parents to work on the situation at home and at school. If the biting continues without improvement, the child may be removed from the school.

Infants and Toddlers:

If a child bites three days in a week, (which can consist of many times through-out the day) the following steps will be taken:

- Conference with the parents to work on the situation both at school and at home.
- After working with the parents and there is no improvement, the child will have to be kept home for a day.
- If it is a severe case of biting, the child may be removed from the school.

Please remember, right or wrong, this is a part of the growth and development of many toddlers. They are learning through their senses. Also, they are not yet able to communicate verbally to let others know their likes and dislikes. There are many reasons why a child may bite such as, lack of verbal skills, not wanting to share, frustration, sickness, teething, medication, separation anxiety, and the list can go on and on. There is no sure cure for this situation only the hope that the child, with lots of help, will grow out of this stage.

GENERAL INFORMATION

We have instituted a “Magic Line” policy for the children. It is the threshold of the classroom doors and playground gate. Once a child has stepped over this line upon arrival, he/she is not permitted to run after mom or dad for one more hug, etc. This is to help in the separation process as well as for safety reasons.

Parents or guardians need to stay with the child during drop-off and pick-up. Children should not be left by themselves. This is a very large and busy facility. Also, please watch your speed and drive with extreme caution when coming in or going out of the parking lots.

Childcare and Preschool hours are 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. No arrangements are available for care before 7:30 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m.

Preschool and Childcare Classes

During our early morning and late afternoon hours, we have Early Arrival/Afternoon Departure Rooms. These areas are for children who arrive early and children who stay later to gather in since there are fewer children at these times. These areas may be the gym, the playground or a classroom according to the teacher’s discretion. Please be aware that children brought in right before lunch or nap time may have a difficult time settling into the class routine. Please do your best to avoid dropping off your child during nap time. If you need to bring your child in late, please let us know so your child’s teacher may prepare for them or you may wait until nap time is over.

Preschool 3’s and 4’s

Preschool classes start at 9:00 a.m. It is best for your child, and the entire class, to be present and on time. If your child is brought in after 9:00 a.m. he or she may lose out on planned educational activities as well as special activities. Also, children brought in right before lunch or naps have a difficult time settling into the class routine. Please be aware that children brought in right before lunch or nap time may have a difficult time settling into the class routine. Please do your best to avoid dropping off your child during nap time. If you need to bring your child in late, please let us know so your child’s teacher may prepare for them or wait until nap time is over.

BIRTHDAYS

We ask that Birthday celebrations are held someplace other than here at school. Balloons, party hats, goodie bags, etc., should be saved for your off-campus celebration. Snacks consisting of cupcakes or cookies are fine, but please check with the teacher to find out if any of the children have food allergies.

COMMUNICATING

Parents, don't judge your child's day by how much paperwork is in the cubby. Learning is done in many ways. Rather than asking your child "What did you do today?" (The reply is usually "nothing" or "play"), try some questions that might yield better results. Statements or questions such as "Tell me about the snack you made," or "Show me how you were a fireman" or "Which toys are your favorite in home living?" may be helpful. You may also refer to the monthly calendar your child's teacher sends home. Check with them the night before and talk about what will be learned and discuss how it was learned the next afternoon. All personalities are different and sometimes bedtime may be more conducive to chatting about the day's activities than at pick-up time. Set time aside for this important bonding process.

CUBBIES

Please check cubbies and backpacks daily for information from the teacher and the office. Sometimes parents feel uninformed when we have made every effort to keep them informed by sending information home, posting it on the bulletin board by The Learning Tree offices, and writing it on the prayer board in the hall. Cubbies should be cleaned out every Friday. No sleeping bags please. Nap time items should fit inside the cubby comfortably.

DISMISSAL

Preschool classes are dismissed at noon. Children staying for Lunch Bunch should be picked up by 2:00 p.m.

Childcare pick-up is any time before 6:00 p.m. Children may be on the playground, in the gym, or in a classroom. This is not a good time to chat with the teacher. Accidents can happen when the teacher is engaged in conversation at the door. Conference times are offered regularly by all teachers and that is the time to discuss your child.

When pick-up is from the playground, parents should go to the playground; the teacher will bring the child to the parent. If the teacher does not see you, please make her aware that you are taking the child.

A late fee of \$15.00 is charged per child for any child picked up at 6:05 p.m. \$15.00 will be charged for every ten minutes thereafter. For example if you pick up at 6:05 p.m. a \$15.00 fee will be billed to your account, 6:15 p.m. will be \$30.00, 6:25 p.m. will be \$45.00 etc. All late fees will be added to your account and are expected to be paid as part of your tuition.

Don't forget to sign in and out for the day.

Babies, toddlers, and 2's receive written reports on the events of their day.

FIELD TRIPS

The PreK 4's will take field trips to places of interest, and places that will contribute to the child's educational experience. Many of these trips are a fun and important part of the child's education. All children attending fieldtrips are required to wear a Learning Tree t-shirt, which is available for purchase in the office.

FIRE DRILLS

We are required to hold a fire drill once a month; children will be trained on this procedure.

LEARNING TREE GYM USAGE POLICY

The gym of First Baptist Church is a wonderful provision for The Learning Tree to use in the event of inclement weather. It is not to be used strictly as a convenience to teachers.

The following conditions warrant usage of the gym for recreation:

1. If temperatures drop below 45 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. The playground is wet.
3. It is raining or there are severe weather conditions such as high winds, thunder, or lightening.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

Breakfast is not served at The Learning Tree. Please make sure your child has eaten breakfast before arriving at school. We do not have a set-up appropriate for children to eat breakfast brought from home in their classroom.

Snacks are served each morning and each afternoon. We serve a simple lunch on Monday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday and Wednesday you will need to pack a lunch. Please make sure that it is a healthy lunch and an adequate portion for your child. Please make sure your child's teacher is aware of any food allergies your child may have. If your child is unable to eat what we are serving, you will also need to bring in their snacks.

NAPS

All children are required to rest or have quiet time in the afternoon. They do not have to go to sleep, but they must rest quietly. The length of time depends upon the age. Please do your best to avoid dropping off or picking your child up during nap time. If you need to bring your child in late or take them early, please let us know or you may wait until naptime is over.

OUTSIDE PLAY TIME

All children go out at playground time unless the temperature falls below 45 degrees Fahrenheit. Children should be dressed appropriately to go outside.

We do not have a special set up for a child to remain inside during playground time while their class is on the playground if they are not dressed adequately or if they are not feeling well. If a child is too ill to go outside, then they are too ill to be at school.

POTTY TRAINING

We do not require a child to be potty trained until the child is ready to enter our 3 year old classes. Teachers of our 2's will work with children and parents to potty train. Parents must realize that individual time is limited in a class situation and our teachers are not required to potty train toddlers by themselves. It is very important that you help us out by working with your child at home. Toddlers require more hands on care; therefore not only time, but understanding on the child's part is limited. Even though a toddler may respond well at home, they may act totally different in a group situation and unnecessary pressure should not be brought onto the teacher to force potty training.

Please only bring Pull-Ups that have the break-away sides and are able to be resealed. Children must be potty trained before entering our 3 year old classes. To be considered fully trained, children need to be able to tell the teacher or to go on their own.

Please do not dress your child in clothing which makes it difficult for a teacher to remove for diapering or potting. No costumes please, school clothing should be appropriate.

WHAT TO BRING

Babies, Toddlers and 2's

1. Everything must be labeled with first and last name.
2. Diaper bag with child's name on it or backpack for 2's
3. 6 to 7 diapers
4. Wipes
5. Change of clothes for babies, toddlers and 2's. Include labeled socks and underwear. Babies and toddlers should have two extra outfits.
6. Bottles of juice, milk, and formula must be labeled with child's first and last name.
7. Labeled jars of baby food when infants start eating solids.

Please make sure babies are fed breakfast before arriving. Morning arrival time is busy, which does not allow for individual feedings.

2's should be weaned from all bottles by the time they leave the toddler classroom and promote to the 2's.

2's, 3's, and 4's

A small school bag or back-pack is allowed but it must fit into the cubby nicely. Please label with first and last name.

1. Sweater, light jacket (depending on weather) – labeled with name
2. Extra change of clothes including underwear and socks – labeled
3. NO DRESS SHOES, BOOTS, or OPEN-TOED SANDALS or CROCS please. These are slippery on the playground equipment. Velcro closures on tennis shoes are best and easiest for the teacher.
4. Sleeping mats, cots and sheets and bibs are provided by the school.

SMOKING POLICY

Smoking is not permitted inside the facilities of First Baptist Church of Winter Park and must be done off property.

TOY POLICY

Children are to keep their toys and other treasures at home except on special "show and tell" days designated by the teacher. Teachers are NOT RESPONSIBLE for the condition or return of toys brought from home. No toy guns of any kind are allowed.

HEALTH AND SICKNESS

Children are to be kept home if they show any of the following symptoms:

- Sore throat
- A fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Nasal Discharge (Green)
- Rash
- Persistent Cough
- Diarrhea
- Impetigo
- Chicken pox
- Measles
- Vomiting
- Mumps
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

If the above symptoms are observed while at school, the child will be sent home. A child must be clear of all the above symptoms for 24 hours starting from the time they are sent home before being allowed back into school. For example, if your child is sent home sick at 2:30 p.m., they are not to return until after 2:30 p.m. the next day.

We must be as firm as possible on these guidelines for the well being of the whole class and staff. We are especially observant of the baby and toddler classes concerning sickness. Teachers may ask for an administrative decision before allowing a sick child to enter class.

After being called to pick up a sick child, the parent, or another authorized person, must arrive within one hour to avoid a \$25.00 fee. Please make sure your contact numbers are up to date.

DIARRHEA POLICY

If a child has one case of diarrhea in a day, the parent of the child will be called to pick the child up immediately following the first instance. If a parent is unable to come, The Learning Tree will call the emergency contact person on their registration card and have them pick up the child. This policy serves the purpose of preventing other children or our staff from becoming ill.

If a parent refuses to pick up a sick child who is in violation of our health policies may be asked to withdrawal their child from The Learning Tree. Please refer to the above sick policy.

HEAD LICE POLICY

In Florida, we are sometimes “blessed” with these little creatures. As in public school, if we have a child with head lice, the parent must pick up their child immediately. The parent must bring the child to the office to be rechecked after treatment before they can return to the classroom the following day.

MEDICATION

Prescription medication must be in the original container with the name of the physician, the child's name, and medication directions written on the label. A written authorization form (HRS-CFY form 5013) is required for any type of medication to be given to the child. The medication is given only for the dates stated on the form by the parent. The form must be filled out properly by the parent and initialed by the office staff member in charge, before being given to the teacher. These forms are available in The Learning Tree office.

No medication will be given unless the above steps have been taken. Medicine should be sent in a resealable plastic baggy with a spoon or dropper with which to administer the medication. Child's name must also be on the bag.

No medicine, whether prescription or over-the-counter, will be administered without the appropriate written approval on file in The Learning Tree office. Approval may not be given verbally over the phone. Medication aged beyond its expiration date will not be administered to a child. The dosage of over-the-counter medication must match the prescribed amount per age or weight as listed on the container unless you provide a signed note from the doctor with written instructions.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.) mandates that any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is abused, neglected, or abandoned by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person is responsible for the child's welfare shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Abuse Hotline of the Department of Children and Families.

Florida Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96-ABUSE.

Teachers and child care providers are legally obligated to report reasonable suspicion of child abuse.

Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-Child.

HOLIDAYS

Holidays and absences are not deductible from a child's tuition as stated in the Parent/Center contract. All tuition is payable 52 weeks a year.

The Learning Tree will be closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Labor Day
- Good Friday
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Memorial Day
- Christmas Week
- Staff Planning Day
- Fourth of July

HURRICANES, DISASTERS, OR CODE RED

At times of emergencies such as hurricanes, disasters, or code red, The Learning Tree will observe the same schedule as Orange County Public Schools. School will be dismissed early and parents will be contacted to pick up children if it is deemed necessary for the safety and welfare of the children and staff. In the event schools are closed because of a hurricane or disaster, fees will be charged as usual. Listen closely to the radio or television to know the status of The Learning Tree being closed.

In the event The Learning Tree needs to make a decision about school, contrary to the Orange County Schools (power outages, etc.), parents will be contacted by the child's teacher. You may also call the main line of the church (407-644-3061) for an update regarding our daily operation.

1/24/2017