

# Tara's Tots

A detailed illustration of a mother duck and her ducklings. The mother duck is on the left, facing left, with a long neck and a small crest. She is surrounded by a group of ducklings of various sizes, some of which are arranged to form the letter 'T' within the word 'Tots' of the title above.

## Parent Handbook 2023-2024

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## Welcome to Tara's Tots

We cannot wait to welcome your child into our urban wonderland!  
During this school year, masks will remain optional for all students and staff.

## Tara's Tots Philosophy

### **Mission:**

Our mission is to provide a magical education where the physical, emotional, and individual needs of each child are nurtured, and where love, friendship, compassion, and appreciation of nature are embraced.

### **Vision:**

Our vision is to nurture each child's competence by providing a healthy environment where children collaborate, create, and care for one another.

### **Values:**

- Hearts

We foster empathy and promote respect for others.

- Hands

We create an environment that helps children develop their gross motor skills by encouraging climbing, running, balancing, jumping, swinging, etc. Through daily arts and craft activities we help children develop fine motor skills that lay the foundation for later academics.

- Minds

We promote language development, word comprehension, imagination, and curiosity through engaging conversation, songs, stories, verses, and rhymes.

## Curriculum and Rhythm

Tara's Tots is a warm, loving, nurturing environment that is a bridge between home and the larger world. Inspired by the principles of Waldorf Education, which is guided by a reverence for life and nature, teachers guide children individually to help them understand their social, emotional, and physical world.

Our artistic and play-based program provides a space for child-initiated activities that promote healthy physical, social, and emotional development in a safe environment. During unstructured free play, children explore the world around them through movement, socialization, and imagination. Teachers help guide children through struggles and conflicts in ways that give children space to share feelings, thoughts, and ideas about conflicts and possible resolutions. Our schools work with families to help them understand the nature of the young child and how best to support the development of a well-balanced child.

Throughout the day children will be invited to participate in group activities such as painting, felting, drawing, movement games, singing, baking, sewing, gardening,

storytelling, finger-plays, and acting – experiences that help children develop age-appropriate skills.

Our mixed-aged classes give students more years together than traditional preschools. This means the class can take on some aspects of a “family” – supporting one another’s growth and development. These developmental differences create a family-style learning environment, which is a valuable and integral feature of our classroom practices.

We know children develop best in familiar and loving environments with as little change as possible during these early childhood years. When each child intentionally spends two to three years in the same school, with consistent teachers, peers, and classroom rhythms and expectations, everyone benefits: the child, the parents, and the community.

We live in a culture that encourages rushing through childhood; young children are often introduced to developmentally inappropriate practices, such as early academics. Our approach to early childhood education is very different. Outdoor play is at the heart of our curriculum. Playing without interruption allows children to explore life’s roles and develop important faculties such as concentration and creativity. Natural materials, wooden structures, boards, stumps, and more all create an environment that feeds innovation and imagination. We honor a child’s need to play, socialize, move, and imagine. These are the skills that help develop a well-balanced child who will thrive in life.

In a world that is all too hurried, Tara’s Tots provides an environment where young minds and bodies can do what they need to do at their own pace and gain the confidence they need to meet their destiny.

*“Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings, who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.”*

– Rudolf Steiner

### **Morning Programs at Songbirds & Chickadees**

Our four-hour morning programs consist of a daily rhythm that provides time for every child to participate in free play, arts and crafts, circle time, stories, and seasonal festivals.

#### **Here is a sample schedule of a typical morning –**

The actual times/activities may vary depending on each classroom:

9:00-9:15 DROP OFF, SETTLE IN

9:15-9:45 FREE PLAY & DAILY/WEEKLY ACTIVITY

10:20-10:35 CLEAN UP

10:35- 10:55 CIRCLE TIME, BATHROOM & WASH HANDS

10:55-11:25 LUNCH

11:25-11:40 CLEAN UP, BATHROOM & WASH HANDS

11:40-12:25 FREE PLAY/NATURE WALK  
12:25-12:30 CLEAN UP  
12:30-12:45 STORY TIME  
12:45-1:00 PACK UP, GOODBYES

Our preschool rhythm concludes 10 minutes before your child's pick-up time. Parents will wait outside and wait for the teacher to bring out their child. Any families requiring an earlier pick-up time should let their child's teacher know at drop off. Children must be picked-up no later than the end of their child's program at 12:30 or 1:00pm. Any child not picked up by the end of their program will be charged \$5 for every minute parent/guardian is late.

If you need care for your child beyond 12:30 or 1:00pm, it may be possible to register with Fremont Community School to attend an afternoon program. Songbirds teachers will transfer morning students who attend Fremont Community School's afternoon program at 1:00pm.

### Afternoon Program 1-5pm at Songbirds

TT also offers an afternoon childcare program. This is a tuition-based program that uses the same facilities and philosophies as the morning program. Parents may enroll their children three to five days a week. As with the morning program, the afternoon program is a four-hour program. We maintain a daily rhythm of scheduled periods of free play, arts and crafts, seasonal projects, and time for a snack. Songbirds afternoon teachers will only be able to speak to the activities and events that occurred while your child was in their care. If you have a question about your child's activities in the morning, please contact their morning teacher.

TT has a strict pick-up policy; please arrive on time. The school day rhythm ends 15 minutes before the school closes at 5:00pm. For afternoon pick-up please come in through the front gate, if the class is not in the front yard, then go to the right and follow the path to the backyard. Please wait in the gnome garden for your child's teacher to send your child down the porch steps.

Any child not picked up by the end of their program will be charged \$5 for every minute the parent/guardian is late past the required pick up time. Please have a backup plan in place for your child in the event you are not able to arrive on time. The School Administration can assist in connecting you with another parent who may be able to serve as an approved pick-up person.

### Signing In and Out

Each parent or authorized guardian will sign their child in and out using our Brightwheel QR code. Please ask administration if you have any questions about how that works. Children will only be released to authorized adults on file with TT. You may add authorized guardians to your child's Brightwheel profile; if you have any questions on how to add other guardians please ask the School Administration. If your child is

being picked up by someone new, please let the teachers know so they aren't surprised to see a new face. Thank you!

## Arrival and Departure

In order to create a sense of security and wellbeing for the children, we ask for your help in establishing a healthy drop-off routine.

- Prior to leaving home, please have your child use the bathroom.
- Have your child walk into school independently by having them stand next to you. When children walk/stand on their own they build physical strength, self-confidence, and prepare for their day away from parents. Children have a much easier time saying goodbye when parents support their independence by not carrying them.
- A teacher will receive your child at the designated drop-off area.
- Please let the teacher know any relevant information with regards to your child – did not sleep well, getting picked up by someone new, etc.
- If you need to discuss something with the teacher that may take time, you may arrange a zoom meeting or phone call with teachers. Please email your teacher or just let them know you would like to meet.
- Parents will check their child in via the Brightwheel attendance kiosk using QR code posted in designated drop-off areas.
- The best goodbyes are kept short and sweet. If your child is struggling with your departure, the longer you stay, the greater their sadness. We know this through years of experience. Give them a big hug and kiss, tell them you know they are going to have a fun time, and then head off. We will take it from there.
- Do not linger at drop-off.

## Departure

Please pick up your child at the designated time and inform those picking up your child about the importance of being on time.

- Pick-up begins 10-15 minutes before the end time of your child's class. Parents will wait outside for drop-off and wait for their teacher to bring out their child.
- Parents will check your child out via the Brightwheel using the posted QR codes.
- Your child will only be released to someone authorized by you on your Brightwheel profile.
- Any families requiring an earlier pick-up time should let the teacher know at drop-off.
- If you do not pick up your child by the designated time, you will be billed \$5.00 per MINUTE that you are late.

## Authorized Pick-up

Upon enrollment, you must fill out your child's Brightwheel profile whereby you list individuals who may pick up your child from school. We will release your child only to individuals you have listed in your profile. To add names to the list, you may personally add their names and numbers and set them up with a pin number through the Brightwheel app. If you have any questions, please contact the School Administration.

### Back-up Plan (if child is ill or you are late)

You must have a prepared back-up plan for unexpected situations whereby your child may have to be picked up early or you are unable to pick your child up on time. It is important that you designate another individual who can pick up your child and wait for you during these times. Their names must be listed on your child's Brightwheel profile. If you need assistance with this, please let the school administration know.

### Cellphones at School

Our staff will have cell phones while working to ensure that they are readily available to respond to parents. Please allow a few minutes for teachers to respond to a text or Brightwheel message. To ensure that our staff's attention is always fully on the children in our care, we ask that you do not call during the program time unless there is an emergency.

### Absences and Late Arrivals

Please contact your teachers through Brightwheel or email the School Administration to notify the staff of any planned or unplanned absences.

Please arrive on time. Children arriving late to school have a more difficult time entering in on play with their friends. It can also be disruptive. Of course, everyone has days when they are running late—so please text your teachers to alert them to your late arrival.

### Extra Days

A child may attend school on a day for which they aren't normally registered provided there is space available. This extra day is an additional cost.

- If you know in advance of days your child will not be attending school, please let the School Administration know. This helps us with letting parents needing an extra day know that there is room for their child.
- On the flip side, if you would like to schedule your child for an "Extra Day," please contact the School Administration who will let you know if the day you need is available. This is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Extra days are \$80 and paid at drop off or the end of the month billing. You will be billed if you have made a reservation and don't cancel by 9:00am the day before.

### Parking

Tara's Tots is located in a residential and commercial neighborhood. We like this about our schools, and we want to be good neighbors. Drop-off and pickup times can cause inconvenience to our neighbors. As a result, we ask you to park respectfully. Please do not park in front of the driveways and be aware of "No Parking" signs and "Zoned" parking areas where you will get ticketed. Parking Enforcement is intense, and cars parked in "no parking" zones will be ticketed by the City of Seattle.

## Food

Families need to provide enough food for lunchtime (served during the morning program), and a snack for children who are attending afternoon care at FCS. Teachers will let you know if your child is in need of a greater quantity of packed food. Please bring food in a lunchbox that your child is able to independently open. Although teachers monitor to help ensure that children may not share food from home with each other, please check your school's allergy policy.

We recommend high-capacity bento-style lunch boxes: some brands our families have liked are Bentgo, Yumbox, and Planetbox. Children also need to come to school with a water bottle that is unbreakable; Hydroflask, Thermos, Yeti, and Camelbak are some popular brands. If you would like, you can send your child with tea or cocoa in an insulated flask in the winter and add ice to that same flask in the summer. It is particularly important to label your child's water bottle and lunch box; please be sure as the year goes on their name has not worn off.

Each child's special needs are considered. If your child has allergies or dietary restrictions or there is a change with your child's allergies or dietary restrictions, you must ensure this is clearly noted on the Allergy Section of your child's Brightwheel profile. Please inform the school administration if you have updated your child's profile on the Brightwheel site.

## Clothing and Accessories

At TT, children are encouraged to explore play to the fullest. Children encounter mud, sand, rough surfaces, and the elements. As a result, children can get messy, wear holes in their clothing, get wet, or become cold. It is no fun to keep playing if a child is distracted by discomfort. A warm, dry child is a happy child. Weather is quick to change in the Pacific Northwest, so it is critical that children dress in layers. Please ensure your child has adequate raingear and boots that are properly labeled for identification. During Fall and Winter please have your children arrive at school dressed in rain gear when rain is forecasted. If you forget your rain gear, the teachers have some lenders that you can put on your child at drop off.

### **Winter Tips for dressing your child for school:**

- Dress in layers of warm clothes. Natural fibers such as wool or silk insulate wonderfully. There are also many synthetic base layer options that our families appreciate; REI makes a base layer for children that has proved popular. Costco has offered economical options as well. Do not wear cotton in winter, as it is cold against the skin when wet and dries slowly.
- A warm hat and mittens keep in the warmth.
- Provide extra layers in their backpack– a fleece jacket is excellent for this.
- Winter in the NW can be cold and wet. Please ensure your child's coat is waterproof, and if it is not, provide a raincoat that is big enough to be worn on top of their warm coat. Down jackets are NOT waterproof.
- Some good brands are Puddlegear, Oaki, and Wheat Kids Clothing.



- Please keep in mind that rain bibs can be a challenge for younger children when going to the bathroom; rain pants are much easier to get on and off.

### **Spring/Summer Tips for dressing your child for school:**

- A wide-brimmed sunhat helps provide added protection. Our families have found hats by the brand “Sunday Afternoon” ideal for young children. L.L. Bean, Columbia, and Outdoor Research also have good options.
- Apply sunscreen to your child before dropping off. TT will re-apply sunscreen as needed. Badger brand makes an excellent child’s mineral sunscreen.
- Most mornings start out chilly, and by mid-morning the temperatures are very warm. A variety of SPF or UV rated clothing is best to have on hand; short-sleeved shirts and shorts, as well as long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- Provide back-up clothes of each category in your child’s backpack.

### **Shoes:**

Provide shoes that your child can put on and take off with minimum or no help. Unless a child is able to tie their own shoes, please do not send your child in laced shoes.

- Children who want to climb trees must wear sneakers. Boots, Crocs, and non-tread sandals are not safe for tree-climbing.
- Some brands designed for active outdoor play that our families have liked are Plae, Keen, Merrell, Splay, and Native. Bog brand boots are excellent for the cold and rainy winter days. We highly recommend summer shoes that have protection for the toes, like Keen-style sandals—open-toed sandals can allow for injury.

### **Commercial television or movie images:**

Through our work we have noted how commercial television or movie images printed on clothing and other personal items can distract and limit the imaginative play of little children. We ask that you refrain from sending your child to school with these.

### **Accessories:**

We also discourage the wearing of jewelry, sunglasses, and other precious accessories as they will most likely get broken or lost. Hair clips and bows fall out and go missing easily, so please provide your child with ones that can be easily replaced. If your child has long hair, we do encourage keeping it back from their face with a clip or tie so that they can safely and easily navigate our play yard!

### **Please provide:**

- A large backpack containing several face masks, raingear, and a complete change of clothes (shirt, pants, two pairs of underwear, socks etc.) These things become soiled, wet, or damaged over time, so please maintain an awareness of them and clean, mend, or replace as necessary.
- A water bottle with their name clearly labeled. We will refill throughout the day as needed.

### To be stored on site:

A Comfort Kit for each child needs to be stored at school and is used only in the case of a facility or regional emergency. This kit is separate from your child's change of clothing bag. The comfort kit needs to fit into a gallon size zip-lock bag and should include essentials like a change of clothes, diapers and wipes (if needed), face mask, warm socks, warm hat, flashlight with batteries removed, non-perishable snacks, family picture, letter, medications (in the original bottle with directions), small book or toy, and anything else that may help your child.

Please LABEL all of your child's personal belongings.

### Lost and Found

There is a lost and found at the school. Please contact School Administration if you are missing any items. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of each season, unless they have your child's name written on the inside. Please write your child's name on all items that come to school. Some parents find it useful to buy iron-on or durable stick-on labels with their child's name. Options are available on the internet for low prices; many of our families like Mabel's Labels.

### Rain and Raingear

The Pacific Northwest is a beautiful part of the country because of its rain. We want our children to enjoy this gift of rain, and celebrate dressing appropriately for it! We encourage you to speak positively of our weather and the benefits of wearing raingear and boots. Please put raingear on at home before you arrive at school. Make a game of getting into the raingear and talk about the fun of jumping in puddles, building dams and standing under downspouts... with the rain hood on, of course!

### Toys, Library Books, Umbrellas and Gifts from Home

- The only toy allowed from home is one small stuffy, as we see that it sometimes helps younger children transition smoothly to school.
- Do not send Library Books to school with your child.
- We love the rain, so please no umbrellas at school. Umbrellas become beloved items to children and are easily broken.
- Please do not bring gifts for other children to school unless you bring enough for each member of the class. If your child has a special gift for another child at school, have your child share this outside of school.
- If your child wants to share a special item at school, please bring the item directly to the Lead Teacher and they will assist your child with sharing it with the class.

### Birthday Celebrations

During the school year, children are honored with a special birthday celebration. This may consist of making a birthday book, telling a birthday story, and giving a special birthday gift. The teachers will do their best to send some photos of the celebration to

you. Your teacher may also reach out to you to about sharing a little birthday treat with the class on their special day.

## Blessings

Prior to and at the end of each meal, the teacher leads the children in a special blessing. In this way we help the children to foster an attitude of gratitude for life and the food we are receiving.

Here are some of the many blessings we teach your children:

*For the golden corn and the apples from the tree  
For the golden butter and the honey from the bee  
For fruits and nuts and berries  
We gather on our way  
We praise our loving Mother Earth and thank her every day.*

*Blessings on our food,  
Peace be on the Earth,  
And harmony in our classroom.*

## Storytelling

Storytelling is an important part of each day. Children love repetition—it helps them fully understand and learn the stories that we tell. This is why we tell the same story for a minimum of three days. This gives children time to really live into the images and language of the story. By telling a story from the heart, children can create their own pictures and build their imagination. Classes may act the stories out, draw pictures from the story, or turn the story into a puppet show as the week progresses.

## Community Events and Festivals

We have a series of events to celebrate the seasons, give rhythm to the year, and bring us together as a community. Events include:

**Harvest Festival:** In late September or early October, we celebrate the harvest abundance all around us with a Harvest Festival. The children will celebrate this special event at school with their teachers.

**Pumpkin Patch:** Accompanied by parents, we visit a local farm's pumpkin patch in October. Children get the opportunity to see a working farm and select a pumpkin of their own to take home.

**Lantern Walk:** In early November after the clocks have changed, we host a celebration of light. The Lantern Walk honors the changing of the light and the celebration of the last of the golden autumn glow. This event takes place in the early evening with the whole community, more details will be provided closer to the date.

**Winter Garden:** Children turning five by the following September will be invited, along with their parents, to a Winter Garden Festival, which is a celebration of light during winter's darkest days.

**Work Party:** This is a time in the spring for parents and children to come work on projects at the school.

**May Day Celebration:** On the 1st of May (if on a weekday), we celebrate May Day, the arrival of spring, and sing and dance around the Maypole. This is a community event for students, parents, and teachers.

**Jump the Log:** Following the last day of the school year, Jump the Log is a very special day for all the children. It is particularly special for morning preschool children who have been with us for two to three years and will make the exciting transition to Kindergarten or First Grade next school year. For all of us, it is the magical exchange between the younger child seeing where they are going and the older child looking back from where they have journeyed. Families meet at Meridian Park for a festive picnic lunch.

**Summer Program:** Our school year ends with "Jump the Log", and our Summer Program begins the following Monday. To participate in the Summer Program, parents must enroll their child and sign a Summer Program Tuition Contract. Specific dates and a full account of events will be provided at the beginning of each school year. You will be informed of any additional events added during the school year.

### School Calendar, Holidays, and Closings

Our school calendar is often designed to mimic the Seattle Public School holiday schedule with a few exceptions. We set the annual calendar in the spring/summer of each year. Parents will receive the new school calendar in August. Updates to the calendar will be provided through email or monthly newsletters. We encourage families to add all school calendar dates to their personal calendar at the beginning of the school year.

Tara's Tots will follow the WA State Department of Health recommendations and guidelines for preschools and childcare centers. Please understand that we also take into consideration the safety of our community and teachers when deciding whether to remain open or closed during a disease outbreak. TT will immediately notify families of closures or modifications to our services. In the event of school closures, TT will follow its policy regarding tuition and deposits noted in the Handbook section on "Tuition." In the event of extreme weather conditions, please tune into KING 5 television or its website (<http://www.king5.com>) for school closure information. TT will follow Seattle Public School closure decisions for their Preschool and Headstart programs.

- If Seattle Public Schools Preschool and Headstart programs are closed due to extreme weather, TT will be closed.

- If Seattle Public Schools are delayed 2 hours, their Preschool and Headstart programs are closed; therefore, the TT morning program will be closed.
- If the Public Schools are on a two-hour delay, the Afternoon program will run 1:00-5:00, unless evening conditions require us to close early.
- We must take into consideration the ability of our teachers to make it to school safely. Although the roads may be clear around the school, the roads where our teachers live may be unsafe for cars and buses. Not all of our teachers live in the city. The region is very hilly, and snow response resources are limited.
- In the event of school closure due to extreme weather conditions, there will be no make-up days for the first 5 CANCELED school days.

### Summers at TT

Every year we offer our school community the opportunity to take advantage of our Summer Program. The Summer Program begins the Monday following the last day of school and offers staggered morning and afternoon program options. TT is closed for the June 19th (Juneteenth) and July 4th holidays. This program is a great way for children new in the fall to get to know the school, other children, and teachers. TT will provide a Summer Program outline and rate information in the Spring.

### Guidance and Discipline Policy

In the first years of life, young children are learning how to manage their behaviors and emotions to meet social expectations. During this time, challenging behaviors often arise as children learn how to communicate and interact with others and their environment. At Tara's Tots, we view challenging behaviors as any behavior that interferes with learning, development and play, is harmful to the child or others, or puts a child at risk for later social or academic struggles.

Challenging behaviors can be considered direct, such as hitting, pushing, biting or kicking; or they can be considered indirect, such as teasing, not following rules, excluding others, name calling, destroying objects, or having temper tantrums.

At Tara's Tots, our goal is to guide children's behavior while understanding that acting out is age appropriate as children learn how to express themselves and meet expectations. Some of the most important lessons learned at school arise during conflict and behavioral resolutions.

Teachers will guide children through conflicts using age-appropriate strategies, but there are common elements that all Tara's Tots teachers use:

**Teachers model positive behavior.** Teachers model how to accept, control, and express their emotions in non-aggressive ways; teachers let children know that they are there to help guide them through their strong feelings and that they will not punish, threaten, or withdraw from children in need.

**Teachers design the environment to minimize conflict.** Teachers provide enough materials and toys for children. Teachers create areas for quiet play and active play, and teachers will always strive to create an environment of calm. Teachers establish simple rules and expectations for the classroom. Classroom rules may be created with children at the start of year and will be simple such as: be kind to yourself, be kind to others, and be kind to your environment.

**Teachers observe and supervise children's activities and interactions.** By observing children, teachers are often able to intervene before challenging behaviors arise.

**Adults help children share their feelings, frustrations, and concerns.** Teachers will help children verbalize their feelings and problems, while also helping them think through their actions and develop solutions, which helps create cooperative learning.

Children whose behaviors endanger others will temporarily work one-on-one with teachers. Teachers will help children move away from group activity to quietly work through issues with teachers and other concerned parties. The teacher will stay close to any child who is emotionally out of control and needs time to privately regain composure.

**All discipline/guidance will be positive, productive, and immediate when behavior is inappropriate.** No child will be humiliated, frightened, or subjected to physical punishment or verbal or physical abuse by anyone at Tara's Tots. Every member of Tara's Tots understands and follows our disciplinary approach.

When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others or property, significantly disrupts the program, or requires significant one-on-one teacher attention, teachers will work with a child's family to find solutions, including referral for outside services or eventual exclusion from the program. Exclusion will always be the last resort, after other interventions have been exhausted, or there is agreement that a different setting may work better for the child and family.

### Accidents and Incidents

It is normal for children to get bumped or bruised in the course of a day of play. Although we will not report every bump, if a child has a minor accident or incident at school, staff will help the child. If they feel the injury warrants your attention, staff will notify the parent in person (if possible) and in writing by sending home a parent notification on the school's minor incident report form and/or over Brightwheel.

If a child has a serious accident or incident at school, the school will notify the parent as soon as possible by phone and a course of action will be taken. In the event of an emergency, the school will call 911. Teachers are certified in First Aid/CPR to assist a child in need.

If a parent is aware of or concerned about an incident or accident at school involving their child that went unreported, please contact your child's teacher to inform them of the incident.

## Communication

As a school built on community, communication is critical. We are committed to clear, timely and open communication regarding school business.

To minimize meetings, mailings and phone calls, preschool communication is directed mainly via email or Brightwheel. Parents are expected to read all email notices, as well as any other notes sent home. Please check your child's backpack daily as teachers often place a child's artwork in their backpack.

Information about school policies is found in this parent handbook. Additionally, staff will communicate with parents personally about issues of individual concern in order to minimize potential conflicts. Please discuss with your child's teacher or the School Administration any changes in your child's routine, such as moving, changes in the family, major trips, family crises, etc.

Communication between staff and parents is a vital part of the continuity and care we provide children.

If you are interested in talking with the staff about your child's activities at school, please arrange a time to meet with your child's teacher. Due to the nature of the school day, it is best to minimize demand on the teacher's time during school hours.

## Teacher Office Hours

Teachers are available at pick-up time to have a brief conversation with a parent. For lengthier conversations, teachers are available to meet in person or phone call. Please let them know if you want a meeting, and you can arrange a time that works best for you.

## Parent Involvement and Participation

Tara's Tots is a community of parents, children, their teachers, and their other care providers. Making this school a strong community is something we strive for, and we encourage parents to participate as fully as they can.

There are several ways we may request your involvement during the year. These include:  
**Parent/Teacher Conferences** — Held in the fall and as needed to update parents of the goings-on at the school or to provide educational information.

### **Parent/Staff Work Parties**

**Festivals/Events** — Attending the Lantern Walk, May Day, Jump the Log, Pumpkin Patch, and Children's Theater performances.

## Parent Conferences



Parent/Teacher conferences are held once a year with each family. Conference days are scheduled on the school calendar and typically held the last week of November. Teachers will hold conferences via Zoom.

You are always welcome to arrange a meeting with any staff member when you feel you have special questions or concerns. This is a great way for you to spend some time with your child's teacher.

### Health Considerations

**Health Record:** Health information is required for each child upon admission. This includes an immunization history (please see immunization policy below), allergies, conditions which require special attention, name and phone numbers of your family physician, and name and phone number of persons to be contacted in case of emergency.

**Allergies:** If your child has allergies, ensure this information is entered in the Allergy Section of the Registration Form on the Brightwheel site, as well as their Brightwheel Student Profile. Please fully inform the School Administration of any protocol involving your child's allergies, possible reactions, and the steps the school must follow if your child comes in contact with the allergen. If there are any changes to your child's allergies, sensitivities, or dietary restrictions, you must update the Allergy section of their Brightwheel Student Profile, and promptly inform School Administration that you have done so. This is our only method of ensuring all staff are made aware of changes. Comments made in passing to a teacher will not be considered an adequate form of communicating changes. Please note that sometimes children with life-threatening peanut or other allergies attend TT.

**Dietary Restrictions:** Please distinguish between an allergy, a food or substance sensitivity, and a dietary restriction on the Allergy Section of the Registration Form and Student Profile. It is important for staff to know health risks for a child.

**Medications from Home:** Please administer medication to your child prior to bringing them to school. For medications to be administered at school, you must provide a permission slip and instructions from your child's doctor. All medicines must be in their original containers and Epi-pens must have the child's name on them.

**Sick Children:** As parents, you know best how your child appears and acts when he or she is ill. The lively environment of school is not a good environment for a child who is not well. Please have a backup plan in place in the event your child is ill. If the teacher feels your child is coming down with an illness, the school will call you.

Childhood illnesses are inconsistent in their presentation. One moment your child may seem fine, a few hours later, your child may be feverish and uncomfortable. Please do not bring your child to school if they display any symptoms of illness such as general listlessness and fatigue or glazed eyes.



In order to minimize transfer of illnesses to classmates and staff and to keep sick children in an environment better suited to healing, we ask that you observe the following guidelines for keeping your child at home:

- Diagnosed Strep Throat or Bacterial Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) - child must stay home 24 hours after first dose of antibiotics
- Diarrhea — three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period, especially if child looks or acts ill. Your child they may not return to school until a full 24 hours has passed since the last diarrhea episode.
- Eyes — thick mucus or pus draining from eye, or unusual redness or pink eye
- Fatigue - unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite or is difficult to wake, confused, or unusually irritable
- Fever — If your child has a fever of 100.0+, please keep them at home; they may not return to school until a full 48 hours has passed fever free WITHOUT any acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Children who present with a fever of 100.0+ will be sent home.
- Lice, Scabies — Must be treated for lice and nits before returning to school. After scabies is treated, children may return to school & parents must monitor children for the next 3 weeks. TT has recommendations for lice treatment services for parents in need; please contact School Administration.
- Persistent coughing - unable to participate in activities due to persistent coughing
- Rash — unknown origin or those known to be contagious such as ringworm, impetigo, or scabies or any draining rash or sore especially with fever or itching
- Vomiting — two or more times within the past 24-hour period. Your child may not return to school until a full 24 hours has passed since the last vomiting episode.

If your child shows any of the above symptoms at school, the School Administration or your child's teacher will call you to pick up your child. We recommend that you also consult with your healthcare provider.

### Communicable Diseases

If your child has been diagnosed with or is exhibiting symptoms of a communicable disease (see list below), please keep your child out of school until you are certain they are no longer contagious.

If any member of your household is ill with a communicable disease, your child must remain at home until the contagion period is over. If a child comes down with the communicable disease, TT may require a doctor's clearance for the child to return to school.

In the event of an outbreak of a contagious disease, all children who are not vaccinated will be required to stay at home until the incubation period is over. Information on other options is available from Seattle King County Public Health Department, Communicable Disease Section.

Any outbreaks of the following must be reported to all parents, and to Seattle King County Public Health Department, Communicable Disease Section:

- German Measles (rubella, 3 days measles)
- Hepatitis
- Measles (rubella, 10 days measles)
- Mumps
- Meningitis (bacterial and viral)
- Salmonella
- Whooping Cough (pertussis)
- Tuberculosis

Parents will also be notified in cases of:

- COVID 19 (exposure to the school community)
- Chicken Pox
- Scarlet Fever
- Strep Throat
- Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)
- Lice and Scabies
- Impetigo

### **COVID-19**

If your child tests positive for COVID19, they must quarantine for a full 5 days. They may return to school if they no longer have symptoms and wear a N or KN95 mask for the following 5 days. If your child is exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID19, they may attend school provided that they test negative and wear a N or KN95 mask while at school for a full 10 days. If the school community is exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID19, everyone will wear a mask for a full 10 days.

### **Chicken Pox**

If you choose to intentionally expose your child to chicken pox (share lollipops, play with a child known to be infected), you are required to keep your child home from school Day 12 – 14 after exposure (exposure is Day 1). If a rash does develop, you must stay home until all lesions are crusted over. Chicken Pox rash usually occurs on Day 14 – Day 16, but the child is most contagious 2 days BEFORE rash and until all lesions are crusted over. (Window of developing illness is anytime from Day 10 – Day 21 post exposure.) Please use your personal judgment and err on the side of caution when deciding whether or not it's time to return to school.

### **Immunization Policy**

Tara's Tots (TT) follows the Seattle Public Schools Immunization Policy which complies with Washington State's Vaccine Requirements. Washington State law requires that children must be immunized or have an exemption before attending school.

For a child to attend TT, parents and guardians must submit a completed "Certificate of Immunization Status":

1. By September 1st for children entering the beginning of each new school year

2. By the beginning of the 2nd week of attendance for children entering mid-year 3. Parents must update forms on file prior to the beginning of each new school year

Children whose forms are not on file by the required timeline noted above will be sent home.

### **Immunization Requirements for Students to Attend TT:**

1. Hepatitis B – 3 doses
2. DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) – 4 doses
3. Hib (Haemophilus influenza type B) – 4 doses
4. IPV (Polio) – 3 doses
5. PCV (Pneumococcal Conjugate) – 4 doses
6. MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) – 1 dose
7. Varicella (Chickenpox) – 1 dose or verification child had disease

### **Exemptions from Immunization:**

If parents or guardians choose to exempt their child from one or more required vaccines, they must fill out the “Certificate of Exemption.”

TT will allow for exemptions from immunization requirements only as allowed for by

Washington State Law:

1. TT does not allow Personal/Philosophical exemptions for the MMR vaccine.
2. TT requires that a licensed health care provider sign the “Certificate of Exemption” for a parent or guardian to exempt their child from school and childcare immunization requirements. The signature verifies that the provider gave the parent or guardian information about the benefits and risks of immunization.
3. A parent or guardian can also turn in a signed letter from a health care provider stating the same information.
4. A health care provider doesn't need to sign the form for parents or guardians who demonstrate membership in a church or religious group that does not allow a health care provider to provide medical treatment to a child.

Children with exemptions on file may be sent home during an outbreak. They can only return to school once the outbreak is over or get vaccinated. TT will notify all parents of an outbreak.

Immunizations save lives and diseases can spread quickly in schools. Unimmunized children are more likely to get a disease that vaccines can prevent and spread it in their communities. This particularly compromises children who are not vaccinated because of confirmed medical reasons. Having fewer philosophical or convenience-based exemptions will reduce the burden on our schools and the risk to medically compromised children and to infants not yet old enough to receive routine immunizations.

## Abuse

We are required by the Department of Social and Health Services to immediately report to Child Protective Services any suspicion of child abuse.

## Tuition and Fees

### Morning Preschool Program

- 3 mornings per week: \$7,779
- 4 mornings per week: \$10,017
- 5 mornings per week: \$12,355

### Afternoon Preschool Program

- 3 afternoons per week: \$6,250
- 4 afternoons per week: \$8,333
- 5 afternoons per week: \$10,416

### Brightwheel:

TT uses a cloud-based administrative site to manage payments, contracts, forms, and other documents. Once a child is accepted to a program, a family will be given access to their file and are free to update information, download tax information, or review their payments to date.

**Application Fee:** A non-refundable \$75 fee is charged along with the submittal of your application for enrollment. This is a one-time, per child fee payable over the Brightwheel site via bank transfer or card payment (with associated fee), or by check. Once you have paid this for your child, you do not pay it again for any other TT program in which they might participate.

**Payments:** All tuition payments may be made through the Brightwheel payment site (emailed monthly) or mailing a payment directly to our school. If you intend to pay by check, please let us know that you will be doing so.

Tara's Tots  
PO BOX 31047  
Seattle, WA 98103

For questions about billing, contact the School Administrator at [office@tarastots.com](mailto:office@tarastots.com)

**Deposit:** A non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 (morning program) or \$350.00 (afternoon program) is required upon submission of the signed tuition contract. This is payable through the Brightwheel administrative site via bank transfer or card payment (with associated fee).

A parent may also pay by check. If a child leaves or reduces the number of days they attend prior to the end of the school year, including prior to the beginning of the school year, the deposit will not be refunded or transferable under any circumstances.

**Tuition:** Monthly Payment on a nine-month installment payment schedule, starting September 1st and extending through May 1st. Other payment schedules may be available upon request.

**Late Fee:** A late fee penalty of \$25.00 for all payments received after the 10th of the month.

**Bounced Check Fee:** There is a \$40.00 fee for insufficient funds and if the same check bounces a second time, there will be an additional fee of \$20.00.

**Registration Fee:** If you choose to accept an offered place for your child, a nonrefundable \$110 fee is charged upon submission of your registration form. This is a one-time, per child fee to cover bookkeeping and administrative costs associated with enrollment. This fee is only paid once per child and is payable online through the Brightwheel site via bank transfer or card payment (with associated fee). A parent may also pay by check.

**Financial Commitment for full school year:** For children attending the morning preschool program, there is no reduction, refund, credit, day trade offs, or other allowance made for snow days, absence, illness, travel, school closures, or missed classes due to other programs.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

Tara's Tots admits children of any race, color, religion and national or ethnic origin. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or national or ethnic origin or the presence of any physical, mental or sensory handicap in the administration of its hiring policies, educational policies, admission policies, tuition assistance programs, and other school administered programs. Acceptance will be made with consideration of age and gender-balanced goals.

### Re-Enrollment

For families already enrolled at TT, we ask that you inform us of your intention to re-enroll for the next school year by the first week in February. A non-refundable deposit of \$500.00 (morning program) or \$350.00 (afternoon program) is required upon submission of the signed tuition contract (due May 2<sup>nd</sup>).

### Deposits: Changes/Withdrawal

If a family wishes to withdraw before the end of the school year, the family must give notice in writing. The family will forfeit their deposit in all cases. If notice is given on or before the 15th of the month to withdraw at the end of that month, the family is only responsible for previous and current month's tuition. If notice is given after the 15th, tuition is also collected for the following month unless the School Administration can fill

the vacated space before the last day of the month. Tuition is collected a month in advance.

If a family chooses to reduce the number of days their child attends, they will be charged a \$40 change fee.

**Thank you for being in our school community!  
We are grateful for the chance to work with your children.**