

INFORMATION AND POLICY STATEMENT

Statement of Purpose

The program at The Learning Tree serves children ages two through six. Because of the great individual differences in this age range, provisions for diversity are imperative. Learning is effective when each child works at his success level in an atmosphere devoid of the pressures that can lead to frustration. Many levels of learning are taking place in an informal, learning-center environment.

The program allows children to learn in ways that are meaningful to them. We believe children acquire knowledge in an active way. At The Learning Tree, children are encouraged to explore and investigate their environment. A main focus is to nurture positive self-images. The way children feel about themselves determines how well they learn.

These are some specific goals of the program:

1. To give children many experiences which promote self-concept.
2. To allow children to experience others in a non-judgmental way and to develop respect for the rights of others.
3. To experience success in activities of their own choosing.
4. To become aware of and to express their feelings.
5. To begin to understand the world around them.
6. To learn to communicate effectively.
7. To express their creativity through art, literature, music, dance and creative dramatics.
8. To problem solve in ways appropriate to their age level.
9. To build strength, coordination and physical skills.
10. To develop good health habits and the ability to manage routines.

At The Learning Tree, we teach children to think and to respect others.

School Hours

The hours of operation are as follows:

Two year olds	9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
Three year olds	9:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.
Four year olds	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Primer	9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. M-Th and 9:00a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday

We ask that you please observe these hours. This allows your child to participate in all planned activities. It is disturbing to a child to miss a project or field trip, late arrivals are disruptive to the other children.

Extended Day

An extended day program is offered Monday through Friday beginning at 7:45 a.m and after school until 3:00 p.m. This is a very low key and relaxing program for children two through six years of age. It is a small group with low teacher: child ratio. Children bring a sack lunch. Children must register to participate in this program—it is not a “drop-in” service. An extra fee is charged monthly for this service.

Dates

Classes begin in the fall, the week after the Dallas Public Schools. Holidays will be the same as those normally observed by the Dallas Public Schools.

Admission Policy

The Learning Tree is licensed by the Texas Department of Human Resources and seeks to exceed the minimum standards of operation. The Learning Tree enrolls children two years through six years of age without regard to race, religion or culture.

In order to comply with the licensing standards, the following forms must be completed before the first day of school.

1. Enrollment Form
2. Authorization for Medical Treatment
3. Field Trip Permit (on enrollment form)
4. Pick-up Authorization
5. Medical Information Form

All children must have a physician’s statement that they are in good health and have had all immunizations. This procedure must be repeated each year.

Withdrawal

Notice of withdrawal must be given to the director two weeks prior to leaving. There will be **no refunds** for the remaining days of the month.

Registration

Registration for the following year is February 1.

Classes

Two year olds

This program is open two days a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We believe two year olds need the opportunity to be with other children and to begin to learn to be part of a group. Our goal is to provide an enriching environment where optimal social growth and motor development can occur. Ratio is 9 children: 1 teacher.

Three year olds

This program is open three days a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Children have individual levels of development that are determined by their social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs. The goal of our three year old program is to help each child grow and develop in all these areas. Ratio is 12 children: 1 teacher and a teachers aide.

Four year olds

This program is open five days a week. As children grow, they learn through exploration. Teachers assist children by providing a stimulating environment as well as a variety of experiences. Cultural awareness is a big part of our program in these classes. We feel it is essential for young children to develop an appreciation for their own culture as well as an appreciation and understanding of people from other ethnic groups. Ratio for the fours is 14 children: 1 teacher.
Ratio
is 14 children: 2 teachers.

Primer

This program is open five days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m and 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday. It is designed to provide an environment for children to polish their social skills, build a solid academic foundation and foster a good self concept while participating in unique class experiences. This class serves as a transition to Kindergarten for those children who would benefit from another year of developmentally appropriate learning experiences. It may also be used as a Kindergarten program.

Parental Involvement

Parents are welcome visitors at The Learning Tree. We believe that parents and teachers work in partnership to provide the best experience for young children. That is why we feel it is imperative that we meet both mother and father. We must also know custody arrangements in the case of divorce.

Our parent program involves the following:

- 1. Parent Orientation Meetings** These will be scheduled for the first month of school to acquaint everyone with philosophy and policy and to introduce parents to the classroom environment and procedures of the school.
- 2. Parent Meetings** These are once a month. Each parent is encouraged to attend.
- 3. Parent Teacher Conferences** These are scheduled each semester. If a conference is desired at another time, the child's teacher will be glad to arrange one at a convenient time after school hours. Both parents are encouraged to attend these conferences.
- 4. Parent Guests** Many of our parents have special skills and are invited to come share their knowledge and skills with the children.
- 5. Notes and Calls** Much communication is done in the form of notes and calls to parents. Be sure to check your child's lunch box for notes.
- 6. Parent Bulletin Board** Additional reminders and announcements and articles are posted on the parent bulletin board in the hall by the front door. The Learning Tree also has a monthly newsletter.

Parents are welcome at The Learning Tree at all times.

Clothing

Children should come to school comfortably dressed in washable play clothes. Activities often involve paint, markers, glue, etc. If a child has to worry about soiling clothes, he cannot explore, manipulate and learn.

Shoes must be worn every day. Flip-flops and slick, plastic-soled shoes are not appropriate for school and may not be worn. They do not provide adequate stability and may lead to injury.

Parents should provide coats, jackets, sweaters, caps and other weather appropriate clothing as the children go outside every day unless it is raining. **All articles of clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name.**

All children also need to have a complete change of clothing including shoes and socks all labeled. Diapers, pull-ups, powder, ointments, and bottles are to be furnished by the parents as needed by their children.

Health and Illness

Children are to be kept home when they show any signs of illness. No child will be admitted or allowed to remain at school when ill. This is not only to protect your child, but the staff and other children as well. One sick child can cause widespread illness, resulting in much missed work for parents and staff. These are some things to consider:

1. **Fever** Children who contract a fever at home or are sent home with a fever must remain out of school until 24 hours after the fever is gone. It is common for fever to be low in the morning and rise as the day progresses. Fever is almost always a symptom of illness and should be treated as such.
2. **Vomiting and Diarrhea** Children with vomiting or diarrhea must remain at home. Children developing these symptoms at school will be sent home and must remain at home for 24 hours following the last incident.

Medications

To administer medications to children at The Learning Tree:

1. Parents must sign an authorization statement and include times to administer the medication according to label directions.
2. Medication must be in original container and labeled with child's full name and the date.
3. The Director must document each dose given with the date and time of dosage.
4. Medication will not be administered if it is expired.

Tuberculin Testing Requirements

All employees of The Learning Tree must have a current TB test.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Hearing and vision screening is provided by The Learning Tree as age appropriate.

Playground

Children must have a chance to exercise their growing muscles, especially the larger ones. Such opportunities for physical exercise can be provided best during outdoor play. Children go outside every day unless it is raining or the temperature is under 40 degrees. This means that on cold days children should wear warm clothes including long pants, coats, hats, and mittens or gloves.

Snacks

Children bring their own mid-morning snack to school. We encourage nutritional foods. No candy or junk foods please! NO PEANUT PRODUCTS. The Learning Tree is a peanut free school due to so many allergies. This is a life threatening allergy for some children and no peanut products are allowed to ensure their safety.

Field Trips

Field trips and outings are taken throughout the year to parks, museums, points of interest and special events. Parents provide transportation and assistance with these trips. All children are required to wear seatbelts and children 5 and under are required to ride in booster seats when traveling in automobiles. Each child wears a school shirt.

Toys

We encourage children to bring objects of nature to school, as well as souvenirs and other unusual things that would be of interest to the entire group for “show and tell,” which is scheduled for specific days in each room. Children are discouraged from bringing everyday toys, such as small cars, play figures, etc. These create problems in the classroom and may be misplaced or lost. **Toy weapons such as guns, knives, and swords are not allowed.**

Birthdays

Birthday celebrations are big events at The Learning Tree. Parents bring refreshments for the mid-morning snack, with a favor if they wish. However, no balloons are allowed at The Learning Tree for safety reasons. Such arrangements are to be made in advance with the teacher.

Medical Records

Children are required to be examined by their physician before entering school. A medical form is provided to be completed by their doctor.

Emergency Medical Forms

Parents must sign an emergency medical form for the school to have on file. This form is provided by the school and must be notarized. This form must be completed before the first day of school. Children may not stay at school without this form.

Medical Emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, after The Learning Tree staff ensures the safety of the child, 911 is called and the parents are notified immediately. Parents are notified of less serious injury by phone also.

Pick-Up Authorization

Parents must sign a pick-up authorization form for the school to have on file. This form is provided by the school. Your child will not be released to anyone but those designated on the form. This form may be updated as needed.

Discipline

Discipline is based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of a child and is directed toward teaching the child to acceptable behavior. Teachers seek to re-channel aggressive behavior and teach the child to respect the rights of others. Physical discipline is not used at The Learning Tree. When discipline is necessary, the problem is discussed directly with the child. Severe discipline problems are brought to the attention of the parents.

Helpful Hints

We need to remember that most new situations cause some apprehension in young children. We as adults can help children through this transition by being positive and calm. The child is never forced to leave his parents. Parents may stay and help the child become familiar with the environment. We encourage parents always to say “good-bye” before the leaving.

Policy Changes

Parents are notified immediately in writing of any changes in the policies of the school.

Minimum Standards

A copy of the State Minimum Standards is available in the office. Also, a copy of Licensing Inspections with phone numbers is posted on the bulletin board near the office.