

# The Tot Spot Parent Guide

## FIRST DAY AT THE TOT SPOT

Prior to your child(ren)'s first day, please bring the following, clearly marked with your child's name:

1. Two current wallet-sized pictures of your child(ren)
2. A change of clothes (weather appropriate)
3. Slippers
4. Small rest blanket
5. 2 snacks and a lunch
6. Sunblock/bug repellent (non-aerosol) (Spring/Summer)
7. Winter outdoor wear (insulated jacket, snow pants, winter boots, hats, thick mittens/gloves) (Late Fall/Winter)

Should your child be hesitant to leave you when taking him/her to the classroom, you may come into the room with him/her for a few minutes, and only if you feel it necessary. Almost always a child will transition within minutes after a parent has left when s/he becomes involved with the interesting activities in the program. If your child continues crying more than 15 minutes after you have left, we will call to inform you.

## HOURS

The center opens at 7:30 a.m. and closes by 5:30 p.m. Most of the educational activities will range from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We appreciate children being dropped by 9/9:30am to give them time to enjoy circle time, individual, and group learning.

Please note, that although staff may be in the building earlier than 7:30 am, you will not be allowed to drop off until the Center officially opens. Additionally, our program closes at 5:30 pm. Please ensure that you arrive in enough time to pick-up your child and allow for our teachers to also leave on time. If for some reason you are unable to pick-up before 5:30 p.m., a phone call to The Tot Spot is required. A dollar per minute late fee will be charged past 5:30 p.m. Chronic late pick-up may result in the family being asked to withdrawal.

## PAYMENTS AND FEES

A non-refundable deposit of \$50 is due at enrollment.

Payment for your child's tuition is due the first day of his/her regularly scheduled week at The Tot Spot e.g. M-F schedule = payments are due Monday, T/TH schedule = payments are due Tuesday. If your child is out the day payment is due, we request payment the next day they are present. Tuition is still due for sick days, program closures such as snow days, teacher training days, and for vacations.

A \$20 late fee may be imposed for missed payment.

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Please be advised that there is a minimum \$35 return check fee.

There is a \$1 per minute late pick-up fee past 5:30 p.m.

## **CLOTHING**

Play clothes are encouraged – simple, washable, sturdy, and easy to manage.

Please label all your child's belongings for easy identification.

When selecting pants for older children who are potty training, we suggest elastic waists and pants that are easy to get down. If the pants have buttons and zippers, please check to see if the child can fasten and unfasten them without help. Tights and overalls are not recommended for children who are potty training due to the difficulty and time it takes to pull them down. Extra changes of clothes are suggested.

Children should always try the zipper or buttons on a coat. Some zippers and buttons are frustrating for the children and are difficult for even an adult to manage. Please do not send your child to school with a coat that has a broken zipper or missing buttons.

Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are recommended (snow boots for winter). Flip-flops, cowboy boots, tap shoes, and clogs are not allowed because they are dangerous and/or a deterrent to active participation in all aspects of center activity.

Parents must provide warm outer clothing for children to wear on the playground. Children may go outside for 20-30 minutes, if weather and temperatures are conducive. In the winter, children should wear long-sleeved shirts or sweaters to the program, as well as hats, mittens, snow pants and winter boots for outside play. The classroom temperature is usually kept around 70 degrees.

Check your child's basket each week to see if her/his clothes need to be replaced or a larger size needs to be brought in. Please ensure that your child's clothing is seasonally appropriate.

## **DIAPERING**

The Tot Spot provides unlimited name-brand diapers, wipes, and rash ointment for all of the children in our program. For any child in diapers, there is a flat fee for all programming options and is required, due to the number of toddlers in diapers and space limitations at our building. Unless specifically stated otherwise or alternative arrangements have been made with the Executive Director, our products will be used for diapering your child. Your account will be billed weekly for a "Child in Diapers". Potty trained children do not apply.

## **ABSENCES**

Parents are requested to notify The Tot Spot staff by 8:00 a.m. if your child will be absent. We do not have make-up days, swap days, or refunds for illnesses or absences. We base our budget on the tuition from each student and need

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a guaranteed amount to meet our expenses.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSURES**

The Tot Spot will be using channel 9 WMUR's television program/website as our primary source for announcements regarding program's cancellations and delays. A recorded message may also be played on our voicemail or posted on our Facebook page.

## **HOLIDAY AND VACATION CLOSURES**

The Tot Spot will have a calendar of important dates for your reference. This calendar will list our scheduled closings for the year. Because we are a small program and are on a budget, tuition is still due for holidays and vacation closures. Payment should be made the Friday before vacation week. Should your family chose to take an alternate vacation or holiday, tuition will be due as usual. We appreciate your understanding!

## **SNACKS & LUNCH**

The Tot Spot does not provide snacks or meals due to the potential differences in familial diets and possible food allergies/sensitivities.

Please send your child with two healthy snacks, as well as a lunch. Please pack foods that are easy to eat, age appropriate, and are not a choking hazard i.e. whole grapes, nuts of any kind, hot dogs, hard veggies, popcorn.

Please do not send food containing sugars, food coloring, or an excess of salt or preservatives. If you have any questions about what type of snacks to send you may ask your child's teacher for suggestions.

Due to space and food-burn risk (overheating foods), we do not refrigerate or heat food at our program. We suggest that you pack your child's lunch with cold/ice packs to prevent spoiling. In the event that you want your child to have a warm meal, we recommend using a child size thermos and heating food up prior to leaving home so that it is the correct temperature at lunch-time.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer to bring snacks for all the children to enjoy. Snacks expose the children to interesting and appealing foods, especially those originating from a different country. Please let your child's teacher know if you are interested in bringing a food item and remember to ask about any food allergies that the children may have.

## **DOOR CODE/SAFETY**

To enhance safety, The Tot Spot uses a locked main entrance in the rear of the building (Spruce St. side). This door has a key lock pad. When your child is about to start the program, you will be given the door code. For the safety of all the children please do not share the code with others. Anyone who does not know the code or is an alternate pick-up person may use the doorbell to be let into the building by staff.

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Please let the Director or Executive Director immediately if there is any threat made to you and/or your child, in which we would need to be concerned for safety at our program and/or need to change our door code.

While many children are capable of opening doors and may be permitted to do so at home, please note that children are not allowed to open doors at our Center and may be reminded of this rule for every child's safety.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

*GENERAL GUIDELINE:* It is imperative that arrival and dismissal times be closely adhered to. The time before class is vital for teacher preparation to ensure a smooth and productive day. We ask that you arrive no earlier than five minutes before the start of class and pick up your children promptly at the conclusion of your program. Promptness in a child's life is very important!

Children are not allowed to walk by themselves from the parking lot to the classroom. Parents must walk with their child into the center where a teacher will greet each child.

We ask that parents do not come into the classroom to talk to the teachers before class. After class, the teachers are usually available for questions. All special daily communications should be written down and given to the greeting teacher. Verbal communications are easily misunderstood or forgotten. You may also call and leave a message. We encourage parents to allow their child the opportunity to hang up his/her own coat and to walk into the classroom under his/her own if s/he can do so (not carried in).

At arrival, please have your child walk (not run) to the door so that s/he is calm upon entering the classroom. And please, remember to take your child to the bathroom before class, if potty training.

At departure, parents must meet their child at the classroom door. No child will be allowed to walk alone to the parked car.

NOTE: In the event, that your child(ren) will be picked up by someone other than the parent(s), we require a written note when your child first arrives at school. The note should state the name and description of the person whom you desire to pick up your child.

We will not allow any child to ride in a car with a person we do not know and whom we have not been notified of previously. Any alternative pick-up person must present valid identification.

Please note that unless there is a court order specifying otherwise, we cannot prevent a parent from picking-up or leaving with his/her own child. If there is a safety concern, please speak with the Director or Executive Director immediately.

## **ILLNESSES**

*Please do not bring your child if s/he is feeling ill. We do go outside as often as possible and this type of playtime*

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may only make your child feel worse or prolong the illness.

Children who have a fever, earaches, vomiting, or diarrhea at the center will be sent home. A child who has had any of these symptoms the previous day or night should not be brought to the program. When recovering from a fever, a child should be kept home for one full day after the fever subsides. Doctors also advise us that it is safe for a child to return to our program after chicken pox when all the pox have scabbed over.

If your child contracts a contagious illness (other than a cold), please inform The Tot Spot so that the other children's parents may be advised.

Only prescription medication may be given to children during the program if accompanied by a doctor's note, this includes aspirin, antihistamines, vitamins, etc. A medication administration form must be completed by the parent as well.

## **ALLERGIES**

We are seeing a growing number of children with allergies and asthma. Please note that while we may be able to accommodate some health issues, we may not be able to accommodate all. Specifically, at this time, we are NOT a Peanut/Nut Free program. We serve some children with minor food allergies and can have "FREE" tables, in which the noted allergenic food is not permitted, but we likely cannot eliminate the risk completely in our facility. We do take care however, in trying to minimize exposure. We always ask that you seek the advice of your Allergist/Physician regarding risk of exposure, level of allergic reaction, etc. and speak with the Executive Director or Director in advance of enrolling. If an EPI-PEN is required, you will need to keep one on hand at The Tot Spot with current paperwork, and within expiration date. If inhalers, etc. are required, appropriate paperwork, equipment, and administration plan, with up-to-date prescription must be kept at our Center.

## **ITEMS FROM HOME**

Please leave all toys, gadgets, stickers, play costumes, candy, etc. at home.

## **INQUIRIES**

Please avoid questioning your child's teacher about your child before or after class, if in the presence of your child. At the beginning of class the teacher is obligated to focus attention on the children or to complete teacher preparation. Please feel free, however, to call and leave a message or to speak to the teachers after class about any helpful information you may have concerning your child's health, attitudes, etc.

Communication is encouraged, preferably during daytime hours.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills are held on a regular basis for the safety of the children. Parents will be notified when fire drills take place.

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## STUDENT WORKS

Students should bring a tote/bag to facilitate in the "taking home" of completed works, lessons, notes and/or other teacher/parent communications on a daily basis. Please bring the tote home each day and return it empty the next morning.

## BIRTHDAYS

Children's birthdays may be celebrated on the actual birth date or the closest school day to it. Parents may bring simple treats that are easy for 1 to 3 year-olds to manage. Beverages, ice cream, candy, and icing are not allowed.

In helping to cultivate a spirit of giving among the children, we suggest that each child bring a small gift on his/her birthday to be given to the program for all the children to enjoy e.g. favorite book, wooden toy. Parents wishing to participate in this tradition should inscribe books with the child's name and birth date and the number birthday the child is celebrating.

If you are planning a home party for your child, please do not hand out invitations at The Tot Spot. Likewise, if your child is attending a party after school, please do not send in gifts to the center with your child. We feel that these situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited and can create hurt feelings and sad children. It would be more appropriate to mail invitations and plan weekend parties.

While you are enrolled at our center, please be advised that we have a program policy that discourages individual staff from attending private birthday parties/celebrations for the children. The staff at The Tot Spot care for many children and would not want to hurt any child's feelings by attending some parties, but not others. This policy helps discourage the perception of preferred treatment of one child over another. Thank you for your understanding.

## HOLIDAYS CELEBRATED IN-PROGRAM

Halloween is celebrated at our center in a non-scary way that is age appropriate. The children will have the opportunity to share their costumes at our Halloween party. We will also be focusing on the season of Autumn.

Thanksgiving is a time when the value of thankfulness is brought to the children's consciousness by helping them become aware of the needs of other people in the world and sharing from their own bountiful lives. They are encouraged to bring food for Thanksgiving baskets, which will be donated to local families in need.

Christmas/Chanukah are times in which stories and experiences are presented that embody the true spirit of giving and sharing. The traditions of Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa are explored.

Easter is celebrated by observing "new life" which is so prevalent in the Spring.

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## MISSING OBJECTS

Please check your child's pockets daily for unusual (hard-to-replace) items. Sometimes things disappear e.g. puzzle pieces, blocks. Never feel embarrassed about returning one of our odds and ends. The children are very honest. Sometimes they desire to take part of their program home with them.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

Any individual conference that the parent or teacher deems necessary may be made by appointment at any time through-out the year.

## FACEBOOK

The staff at The Tot Spot will use Facebook as an additional way to interface and communicate with families. We will post information about our curriculum, what fun activities your children are doing from week-to-week, important reminders and closures, and may from time-to-time post photographs of the children.

If you have specific correspondence regarding your child for the staff at The Tot Spot, please write a note for the lead teacher, call or use our email address (include your child's teacher's name in the subject line) rather than using Facebook.

Also, while you are enrolled at our center, please be advised that we have a program policy that discourages individual staff from being private "Facebook Friends" with our families. We realize that many people post personal information on their Facebook pages and we want to respect everyone's privacy, especially outside our program hours.

## OUTSIDE CHILDCARE OR BABYSITTING

We understand that many children in our program develop a bond with their teachers, which we are elated about, as are many of you. We also realize that it can be difficult to find childcare options during the hours that The Tot Spot is closed. Please note that while the staff, including substitutes, at The Tot Spot might seem like a natural choice for your personal/after-hours childcare needs and we are flattered that you may find our staff caring, trustworthy, and competent, we do have a policy that prohibits any outside childcare arrangements. The Tot Spot staff and substitutes must keep professional boundaries between our Center and families, as this is the only way that we can strive to maintain healthy and appropriate relationships. Additionally, The Tot Spot would not have any control over or obligation to remedy any potential for unpleasant circumstances, tardiness/cancellation, or conduct while an employee is off the clock. We greatly appreciate your understanding in this matter. There are many great options for childcare on sites such as care.com.

## WITHDRAWAL

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Please note that The Tot Spot requires you give a 30-day notice in writing, if you want to withdraw from our program. This time period allows us adequate time to fill your child's opening. Per the Parent Contract, tuition will be charged if you do not fulfill your 30-day notice. The Executive Director reserves the right to waive any or all of the 30-day notice period, including tuition due. If a family is moving on to one of The Tot Spot's affiliate programs, withdrawal arrangements will be made on a per case basis and as openings permit.