
Tinley Park – Park District Tot Time Preschool

PARENT HANDBOOK



Bettenhausen Recreation Center
8125 West 171st Street
(708)342-4200

Shawn Roby - Director of Parks & Recreation
Meghan Fenlon - Superintendent of Recreation
Debbie Maloney - Tot Time Director/Recreation Supervisor

CLASS LOCATIONS

Bettenhausen Recreation Center
Room 1 – (708) 342-4235
Room 2 – (708) 342-4236
Room 3 – (708) 342-4237

Vogt Woods
6527 West 171st Street (708) 429-0120



Tinley Park - Park District

Tot Time Parent Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to the Tinley Park- Park District Preschool! The philosophy of Tinley Park - Park District's Tot Time Program is to provide a program that is both nurturing and positive for the development of three and four year olds. Our goal is to provide a secure environment which meets the needs of each child. The experiences offered in this environment include opportunities to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.

Our three and four year old classes have specific developmentally appropriate learning activities for each age group. Preschool activities include academics, arts and crafts, games, sports, story time, music, holiday parties/shows, field trips and fun! The following are a few of our everyday activities:

- Calendar, pledge and circle time
- Singing and rhythm activities
- Stories
- Free play/creative expression
- Body movement and coordination/music
- Math & Science
- Fine motor development through drawing, tracing, writing and cutting
- Center-based learning
- Creative art experiences

Early childhood education comes at a stage in a child's life when he/she is physically and emotionally ready to explore the world with new people and in new places, separate from his/her parents. It is meant to be an extension of the learning experiences he/she receives from birth.

Curriculum

At the Tinley Park- Park District, we strive to provide all children with a well-rounded curriculum to prepare them for future preschool or kindergarten schooling the following year.

These are the values that we strive to provide:

- **Academics**
 - Letters—Each week we explore a new letter. We follow a progression through the alphabet which starts with “easier to write” letters and progresses in “difficult” letters for children as the year evolves.
 - Numbers and Math—Each week we focus on new numbers. Children learn new numbers by writing/tracing and by incorporating math skills with counting, patterning, comparing, and measuring.
 - Shapes—We learn a new shape every week with our students. Children go beyond the basic shapes of circles, triangles and squares and learn about rhombus, octagons,

- diamonds and more.
- Colors—We focus on a new color every week with the children. We learn all colors of the rainbow and discuss what colors are created by mixing other colors as well.
- STEM and Science Focus—Each month, we have a theme in Science/Technology/Engineering/Math programming to challenge children and help them develop.
- Literacy Focus—We challenge students to learn more as we explore books and reading in the classroom. We ask children to retell a story, to map out the events of a story, learn the parts of a book, and find letters inside the books we read.
- **Social Emotional Focus**
 - We strive to help children discover their social emotional components. This can be achieved by learning what it means to be a friend, talking about emotions, knowing why sharing is important, figuring out how to cooperate with others, and learning why being kind is important.
- **Play**
 - We encourage play, imagination, exploration, and fun in our daily routine. Whether it is exploring the great outdoors on a nature walk, creating a masterpiece out of playdoh, learning in centers or coming up with a new story to tell, play is evident in many of our activities.

We believe that our students are taught with a curriculum filled with academics, social emotional experiences and play factors that help mold them into the best well rounded student they can be.

Teaching Staff

There are two teachers in each class. Many of our teachers have been with us for numerous years and have educational background in early childhood development. All of our teachers are certified in CPR and First Aid.

First Day of Preschool

The first day of school is “**Meet & Greet**”. Parents & students will come the **first hour** of their scheduled class time to meet their teachers, classmates and classroom. **Parents will stay with their preschooler on this day and go home together.**

First Weeks of Preschool

After the first-class session, we will ask parents to say goodbye to their child at the door. A child coming into preschool for the first time may feel some separation anxiety, especially if he or she sees anxiety on the parent’s face. We have found that most children stop crying within minutes of a parent’s departure. Our advice is to leave your child with a smile and a kiss, tell him/her when you will return and leave. The teachers will be at the door to welcome each child and parents will not have to come inside. Be assured that your child is under excellent guidance. The staff is prepared for these situations and will comfort your child. If a child has trouble separating, parent and teachers work together to

develop a plan to promote independence. When a child continues to have a difficult time in class, teachers may offer an alternative schedule where the parent comes to pick the child up earlier if the day is too long or bring the child later if entering the classroom is too difficult.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Please keep us informed of any changes at home (new siblings, grandparent visits, new pets, etc.). Any of these could affect your child's behavior and notification will help us work more effectively with your child. **Notify the teachers when you have a new telephone number, address or if there are any changes on the emergency information sheet this will expedite our ability to reach you in an emergency.** We believe parents and teachers working together will provide the best learning environment for young children. We utilize **CLASS DOJO** for daily communication with parents.

Early Intervention

Teachers act as an advocate for you and your child. The earlier a delay or disability is identified, the better the chance that intervention services may help a child reach his or her potential. Your child's teacher can provide you with valuable resources. A teacher may need additional information on how to best meet your child's needs. In this instance, the teacher may request that you contact your school district for a professional evaluation. This professional will then communicate with both you and the teachers.

Questions/Concerns

Questions or problems concerning preschool should be discussed with your child's teachers. If they do not have an answer or solution, please contact the Tot Time Director, Debbie Maloney at (708) 342-4202.

School Closings

Tinley Park- Park District is off for a variety of holidays, winter, and spring break. All of those dates can be found on your yearly calendar as well on Class Dojo announcements. During winter, preschool will not follow District 140 or 146 on inclement weather days off. Parents will receive a message through Class Dojo letting you know that preschool is closed due to inclement weather. **Any class cancellations due to extreme weather conditions such as snowstorms will not be rescheduled for make-up.** We DO NOT follow any school district in regard to institute days either. Please stay updated on **Class Dojo**.

Parking

There are designated areas for parking. You are prohibited from parking in the handicapped spaces, fire lanes or the roundabout in front of the Rec Center. **VIOLATORS WILL BE TICKETED!** Children should not be left unattended in the car while the parent is entering the building.

Arrivals & Dismissals

Preschool will begin and end promptly at the designated times. **The AM classes are 9:15 to 11:40 a.m. and PM classes are 12:30 to 2:55 p.m.** Upon arrival, please escort your child inside the building and to the classroom. **Doors open for dismissal at 11:40 a.m. and 2:55 p.m.** Please be prompt when picking your child up from preschool. Your child will be waiting for you and will worry if you are late. **If you know you are going to be late, please call your child's teacher. Your child will only be dismissed to those persons authorized by a parent, in writing, listed on your health/emergency form as having your permission to pick up your child from school. Please have any person picking up your child bring a**

Driver's License or I.D. to dismissal. Carpooling may be arranged among parents; however, the teachers must be informed in writing who may pick up your child. In the event of any change, daily or long term, the child's parent must notify the teacher in writing.

Late Pick up Policy

All parents who are late picking up their child will be asked to sign a late pick-up notice. We will give each family a warning before we start charging a late pick up fee. There will be a fee of \$1 per minute for every minute you are late to pick up your child. All late fees will be directly billed to your household account.

In case of an emergency, please contact the building where your child attends, so the teachers are aware of the situation.

Dressing for Tot Time

Please have your child dressed as comfortably as possible. Inexpensive play clothes are the best. All clothes should be simple so that your child can handle his/her clothing independently (such as during bathroom visits). A wide variety of art materials will be used that tend to get messy and the children can enjoy themselves more if they don't have to worry about their clothing. Parents are reminded not to allow their child to bring jewelry, toys, candy, gum or money to preschool.

No weapons of any kind are allowed at school, real or pretend.

Personal Needs

All preschool participants must be potty trained prior to the beginning of the school year. For the health and safety of all concerned, the children must be able to handle their own bathroom needs, i.e., belts, zippers, buckles, wiping, etc. Please dress your child in "user friendly" clothing. **To help avoid accidents, please have your child use the facility washroom prior to the start of his/her class time.** If your child has a bathroom accident and they cannot change/clean themselves, you will be called to come and change him/her. The teachers will do their best to assist your child. Please be sure the people on your emergency phone list are aware of this policy.

Please provide a change of clothes that can be kept in your child's backpack in case of an accident.

Daily Snack

The children bring their own snack to school. They will have snack time daily. Items do not need to be individually wrapped but must come in a baggie or plastic container. Please supply your child with a small **"spill-proof" water bottle** each day. 8oz or smaller is a perfect size for them. A suggested snack list has been provided to you. Your cooperation is appreciated. Snack is a special time to develop socialization and conversational skills. Because of food sensitivities for some children, the preschool classrooms are **peanut-free** environments.

Please do not bring nuts, any items containing nuts or items having a label that states it was manufactured in a facility that processes nut products to class.

Health & Safety

If your child is ill or has a fever, we discourage their participation in Tot Time. Please do not send a child who has any of the following the morning of class: fever, sudden loss of taste or smell, headache, shortness of breath, diarrhea, vomiting, runny nose, pink eye, lice, etc. If we are made aware of a contagious illness that was brought to class, we will notify the class as soon as possible. These illnesses

include ones such as novel corona, chicken pox, strep throat, lice or pink eye. We will respect your confidentiality in reporting the illness. If the child had lice, a doctor will need to clear them of nits and live lice to return to school.

If a child becomes ill during Tot Time, a parent will be notified will be required to pick up the child. The student will be separated from the class, per IDPH Guidelines. If a parent is unavailable, the emergency contact will be called.

Injury and Illness

For any child who is injured and requires more than basic first aid, the following steps will be taken:

1. Attempt to contact parent/guardian.
2. Attempt to contact emergency listings.
3. If necessary, the child will be transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance, accompanied by a staff member.

The Tinley Park- Park District does not provide accident insurance or medical insurance to its participants.

If any child has a rash, fever or other signs of illness, and the parent/guardian cannot be reached, staff will contact persons listed on the participant's authorization to pick up form.

ALL MEDICATION should be administered at home when possible. **In order for medications to be administered at school**, we must receive a completed medical permission form. The form is attached to this packet. **If medication is not required, there is no need to turn the form in.**

Progress Reports

Throughout the year the instructors will keep parents informed about their child's accomplishments. Parents will receive progress reports twice a year explaining their child's skill development in different areas.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special occasions at Tot Time and receive special attention at preschool. If you would like to send a special book for the teachers to read that day, that would be appropriate. For your child's birthday celebration day, the teachers will give you information on what they do to celebrate their SPECIAL DAY. If you would like to celebrate your child's summer birthday at Tot Time, please make arrangements with your child's teacher to bring in their favorite book for their special celebration.

Class Communication

We will be utilizing Class Dojo for communication from the teachers to the parents. You will receive a code at the Meet and Greet on the first day. We will issue one code per class. The teachers will post photos, weekly reminders, updates, emergency notices etc. to Class Dojo, so please make sure and establish your connection. You will be able to quickly communicate with your child's teacher with messaging on Dojo.

Behavior/Code of Conduct

It is our belief that discipline is an ongoing process of developing inner controls so children can manage their own behavior in socially approved and acceptable ways. Our teachers help children follow basic rules for responsible behavior by providing an environment where children can learn to problem solve and develop skills to promote self-discipline and assume responsibility for their own actions.

The Teacher's Role in the Discipline Process

Teachers use the following techniques when promoting self-discipline

- Encourage and compliment appropriate behavior
- Offer alternatives
- Ignore minor incidents
- Apply natural consequences
- Redirect children to another activity
- Have appropriate, child-centered, consistent and fair rules
- Incorporate the children's ideas into classroom rules
- Role-model appropriate behavior
- Enter into play
- Reinforce appropriate behavior in peers
- Remove the child from a situation to help the child gain self-control

The Child's Role in the Discipline Process

- Encourage others to be respectful, responsible and be safe
- Role model appropriate behavior
- Use words to express feelings
- Problem solve

Discipline notices will be discussed with the parents of children who do not respond positively to teacher redirection for behavior such as:

1. Being physically abusive: hitting, kicking, biting, throwing objects
2. Defiance of authority
3. Abusive/foul language
4. Abuse of equipment, supplies, facilities

The first notice will alert the parent of the inappropriate behavior. We will ask you to stay after class to verbally discuss any issues we are experiencing. After the initial conversation, the parents, Tot Time director and teachers will meet to discuss a behavior modification plan if the behavior continues.

Teachers may request permission to access outside resources or the child's school district for additional information on how to best meet the child's needs.

Our next step would be to have the parents, teachers, supervisor, and other professionals working with the child will meet to implement the behavior modification plan. This plan will be reviewed and modified as needed.

If, at any time, a child's behavior threatens his/her own safety or the safety of others, the parent/guardian will be notified and is expected to pick the child up from class immediately.

If a child is not benefiting from our program, or the health, safety and welfare of this child, and/or that of another child in the group are at risk, we reserve the right to dismiss the child. The Tot Time Director reserves the right to review each situation on an individual basis and may eliminate steps depending on the severity of the incident.

PROHIBITED DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES

- Physical punishment
- Abusive or profane language
- Public or private humiliation
- Shaming or isolating
- Withholding food

ADULT RULES OF CONDUCT

Any parent/guardian or authorized person who displays any one of the following behaviors will no longer be allowed at the site:

- Physical abuse: shaking, grabbing, hitting, pushing, etc.
- Verbal abuse, including inappropriate language or threats
- Use or possession of alcohol or illegal substances
- Smoking on premises

Supplies needed:

- A backpack large enough to fit an 8 x 11 piece of paper
- Small spill proof water bottle for them to bring **daily** to school
- Healthy snacks (provided by you **daily** – send in their backpack)
- Change of clothes for their backpack (Just in case!)
- Clorox wipes (**Families with last name A-M**)
- Pack of baby wipes or Kleenex (**Families with last name N-Z**)

We appreciate these donations as we are always in need of them!

Healthy Snack List Ideas

Parents and Guardians—

Here are some healthy snack list ideas to send your child with for your child's daily snack. Please remember, it is a snack, not a meal, so please send your child with a small snack to enjoy! **(NO PEANUT or NUT PRODUCTS)**



Fruit

- Apple Slices
- Banana
- Clementine
- Grapes
- Pear Slices
- Blueberries
- Blackberries
- Raspberries

Vegetables

- Carrot sticks
- Celery
- Broccoli

Dairy

- Cheese stick
- Cheese cubes
- Sliced cheese

Other Snacks

- Pretzels
- Goldfish
- Dried Fruit
- Crackers
- Tortilla Chips
- Triscuits
- Nut Free Breakfast Bar

