

Tiny Tots & Kinder Ready

Parent Handbook 2011-2012

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...from the Director's Desk

Welcome to the City of Petaluma Tiny Tots Preschool. Our goal is to offer your child a positive first learning experience.

The foundation for children's successful development is established early in life. From birth, children interact with others in a variety of contexts that shape who they are as individuals. Two of the most influential environments for young children include the family and the child care environment. The family environment appears to have more influence on children than any other environment in which children interact (NICHD, 2006); however, given the fact that such a high percentage of children are spending substantial amounts of time in non-parental care arrangements, the quality of care that children receive during the preschool years contributes to their development in important ways.

Tiny Tots Preschool provides

- Small group sizes with high staff-to-child ratios
- Low staff turnover rates
- A well-educated staff who have received specialized training in child development and is certified in First Aid and CPR
- An age appropriate physical environment that provides children with opportunities for safe and enjoyable indoor and outdoor play
- Programs that involve children in a wide variety of activities that promote development in multiple domains (ie: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive)
- A family friendly environment that encourages regular parental involvement
- Programs that promote the health and safety of children, including proper nutrition and food safety practices
- Warm and responsive caregivers who meet the needs of the child.

Raising children is probably one of the hardest, but most rewarding things we do in our life. We hope in the time your child spends with us, they will develop a love of learning, and see school as a place of fun, friendship and discovery. We are here to help you and your child in their transition and we are always available to talk, and refer resources that will better help you in your role as a parent. I strongly feel a connection between home and school is crucial in the success of your child. Please keep us informed and do not hesitate to ask questions or speak to us about your concerns. I can honestly say that every member of my staff loves working with children and seeing them blossom and grow and have the best possible experience.

These are such important years in your child's life, and we feel honored that you have selected us to be a part of their early learning years.

Warmest Wishes for a wonderful school year,

Roberta Guerra

Roberta Guerra
Tiny Tots Director
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Introduction to Programs

Introduction

In January 1989, the City of Petaluma Recreation Department's Tiny Tots program began. The program is open to three to five year-old children. The classrooms are located in the beautifully designed, furnished, and equipped preschool rooms at the Petaluma Community Center.

Philosophy

We believe that young children learn best through play. They are able to develop socially, intellectually, emotionally, and physically in a safe environment under the supervision of caring and trained adults. We strive to give each child a positive first learning experience. They learn social skills, expressive language, cognitive development and fine and gross motor skills through play and age appropriate activities. Your child will gain confidence, self esteem, form friendships and gain the necessary skills to prepare them for kindergarten.

Staff

Tiny Tots Preschool employs a dedicated and well-educated staff with extensive early childhood experience. Our staff is committed to creating a safe, fun, and developmentally appropriate school experience. Our teachers have years of experience as well as ECE classes from Santa Rosa JC and many hold a BA or AA in related fields of study. Every teacher is fingerprinted and receives a background check.

Volunteers are also fingerprinted and often we are a site for teenage volunteers serving an internship as part of their high school curriculum.

Our staff meets regularly for planning sessions and is encouraged to avail themselves of ongoing Early Childhood Education workshops and conferences to remain informed of the current issues, trends and tools in Early Childhood development.



Licensing

We are a license exempt preschool. This is granted to preschools that have open enrollment on a month to month basis and for half day programs where the children do not attend more than 12 hours a week per program. We are City-sponsored recreation program. Our goal is to meet or exceed the health and safety standards the State recommends. Any questions you may have concerning the quality of our program may be discussed with the Director. We value the trust you place in us when you enroll you child in Tiny Tots.

E.C.E.R.S Evaluation

In March of 2001, our program underwent an evaluation by the inspectors for Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale. We passed this inspection for a quality preschool program. We are constantly updating our program based on the latest findings in Early Childhood Education.

NAEYC

I am a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, as well as a member of Sonoma County chapter. I am also involved in the Sonoma Cares program, developed to assist Early Childhood Educators in taking classes and attending workshops on the latest information and issues in early childhood education.

Program Descriptions

TINY TOTS PROGRAM

Tiny Tots is offered Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9am – 12noon. We offer children the fun of learning through their own active discovery in art, music, language arts, and dramatic play. An outdoor curriculum for active learning and gross motor skills is also included. Interacting with other children their own age allows the preschool child to form friendships, learn social skills, have fun, and develop emotionally under careful adult supervision. By keeping our monthly fees as low as possible, we strive to provide an affordable preschool experience for children. The City of Petaluma does not discriminate in employment or provision of services. We are ADA compliant.

Our maximum teacher-to-child ratio is 1:12 with a maximum class enrollment of 48. We welcome parent volunteers who can commit to one day a week for the entire school year and will provide finger printing and background checks for those who are interested in being an active part of our program.



KINDER READY PROGRAM

KinderReady is offered Monday and Friday from 9am – 12noon. The purpose of Kinder Ready is to provide an opportunity for 4-year-old children who will be entering Kindergarten in the Fall to develop the necessary skills. They work in small groups of 8 children with their teacher. The children will work closely with a teacher all year and they will be able to track their progress and develop curriculum that will enhance their preschool experience and prepare them for Kindergarten. This is a more academic approach and it is only for children who will be

entering Kindergarten in the Fall. We will cover cognitive skills, math, science, social skills, language arts, fine and gross motor skills. There is a \$20 curriculum fee payable to the Director at the beginning of the year for the Handwriting without Tears workbook and Weekly Reader.

We will be offering more advanced curriculum for children who are in their second year of pre-K.

LUNCH BUNCH PROGRAM

This program is an opportunity for your child to share lunch with friends and teachers in the preschool classroom. Lunch Bunch is offered Tues-Thurs 12:00-1:00. The children can bring a lunch, and enjoy free play with their friends under their preschool teacher's supervision. The cost is \$20 for 4 visits at lunch bunch. You purchase a 'Lunch Bunch' card with a minimum of 4 visits and a maximum of whatever you would like. You will then scan the card at the front desk on the day you wish to attend.

PARENTS NIGHT OUT PROGRAM

Offered once a month, this is an opportunity for your child to come to preschool in the evening, play and eat dinner. Siblings are invited and parents get to have a night out without the children. There will be sign-up sheets announcing these events. Additional fees are required to attend these events.

Important Information

Separation Tears

- Saying good-bye can be difficult for children and parents. We make every attempt to help you with this transition.
- If you have concerns of this nature, please see us. We are here for you and your child.

Daily Schedule

- Each day is spent encouraging our children to learn and have fun with friends their own age. The curriculum is based on selected themes and is implemented through various techniques, including art, music, stories, creative play, and cooking. Activities are geared with the developmental and skill levels of the children considered.
- Periods of active play and quiet times are varied. Weather permitting, we provide daily outdoor curriculum and free play or indoor play in one of rooms at the Community Center.

Discipline



- If a child needs to be disciplined for a behavior that is inappropriate or has the potential for being self-destructive, our staff will provide a safe environment to help the child control his or her behavior. Notes will be sent home to keep you informed.
- If the time should come that we need to consult with parents, we will ask for a conference. We feel that in the best interest of the child, there should be consistency from school and home.
- We can arrange outside resources to help you with concerns you may have about your child's behavior.
- We have a responsibility to keep all children safe at Tiny Tots and children who can not comply with appropriate behavior may be asked to find another program that can serve their needs more affectively. Every effort will be made to give your child a positive first learning experience.

Telephone and e-mail

- You may reach us by calling our classroom at **778-4407** or the front office at **778-4380**.
- We do have voice mail and messages may be left for us. Non-priority phone calls will be returned after the children have left for the day, or the following day if you call after we have closed.
- E-mail rguerra@ci.petaluma.ca.us

Communications

- We keep parents informed through newsletters and file notes, and our website and e-mails.
- Formal parent conferences are not held. However, our staff is available if you wish to discuss your child's progress or problems. If a formal conference is desired, speak with your child's teacher and an appointment will be made.
- Most brief communications can be done at arrival or dismissal time, provided it does not interfere with the teacher's relationship with the other children in the class.

Clothing

- Comfortable, washable play clothes and strong shoes (no thongs or flip-flop) suitable for outdoor playground use are encouraged.
- We realize that at times children like to wear dress up shoes or cowboy boots to school; however, many tears have resulted because of slippery soles on the sidewalk and playground equipment.
- Don't forget jackets or sweatshirts for the outdoors as we try to allow for outdoor play whenever weather permits. **Please mark your child's name on all jackets, sweaters, and sweatshirts.** To a child, jackets look the same and can mistakenly be taken home.



Toileting and the Classroom

- We are not licensed and our classroom is not set up to meet the sanitary code requirements of the Health Dept. regarding diapering; therefore our staff is unable to change disposable diapers or pull-ups.
- **We require that Diapers and/or Pull-Ups not be worn while attending Tiny Tots.**
- We understand that "potty related accidents" do happen and we are able to change your child if that should occur. You may keep a spare set in their cubby or we have clothing on hand.
- Please help your child in this area by dressing him/her in clothing that can be removed quickly when they hurry to the bathroom. City policy does not allow staff to accompany a child into the bathroom. Clothing that your child can easily manage by himself is recommended. Elastic waist bands, no belts or snaps work best. Dress them for Success.

Arrival and Dismissal

- Classes are from 9am-12:00pm.
- We do not offer extended child care. In the event that you are delayed in picking up your child, please call us at 778-4407 to let us know that you are delayed so we can tell your child that you are on the way. If this policy is abused, a late charge payable to the teacher will be enforced. **A charge of \$10.00 for every fifteen minutes after 12:00 pm will be assessed.**
- For the children's safety, when picking up your child we ask that parents wait until their child is dismissed from closing group by the teacher and stays with the parent.
- Please have children walk quietly in the halls to and from class as meetings are occurring in other rooms.

Sign-in and Sign-out

- All children must be signed in and out of Tiny Tots each day by a parent or legal guardian.
- Only the child's parents and those adults approved on your registration sheet will be allowed to sign your child in and out. This policy is for your child's protection and for legal purposes.
- For dismissal to someone not approved by you on the registration form, we ask that you fill out a gold colored TEMPORARY PERMISSION FOR DISMISSAL form kept by the sign-in clipboard. This release is for the day only and the teachers pay special attention to these because the dismissal routine is unusual and the routine is interrupted.
- Names of carpooling parents should be placed on the child's original registration form. Those approved parents will be taking your child home regularly in their carpools.
- We realize that there may be a large number of parents coming to sign their child in and out each day. We ask you to be patient and courteous at these times. We encourage friendly "parent to parent" socializing at this time. We ask that you move into the classroom proper so that strollers, etc., do not cause a bottleneck at the clipboard area.

Cubbies

- Each cubby will be labeled with a child's name, children may place their personal belongings in the cubby for the day.
- Check cubbies often for papers and information that needs to go home.
- Your child also has a file folder for important papers, check these daily.

Lost and Found

- Please label all loose items that are brought to Tiny Tots (ie: jackets, lunch boxes, etc.)
- **When doing laundry at home or checking little pockets, you may find small puzzle pieces, Legos, etc. Please return them to Tiny Tots. Sometimes they wander home but need to be returned to complete the puzzle or game.**

Snacks

- We provide a simple, nutritious mid-morning snack for the children.
- We obtain our information about a child's food allergies or restriction due to religious beliefs from the registration forms you completed at the time of enrollment. We are concerned about allergies that may cause serious illness from certain foods (e.g., dairy products, wheat, chocolate, juices, etc.)--not food preferences. If appropriate, we make exceptions to our nutritious snacks when we are celebrating a birthday or a special holiday.
- We ask parents who offer to bring snacks, to be considerate of our nutritious snack policy. If you have questions, please ask a teacher.
- Throughout the year we will ask that you help us with our healthy eating habits. The 1st part of the school year we ask that you bring daily fruit, after the winter break we ask that you bring fresh vegetables.

Special Day Celebrations

- Celebrating your child's birthday with his classmate can be fun. The teachers will gladly work with you regarding our parents' part in this celebration.
- You may bring a favorite, simple and **nutritious** snack to share at mid-morning snack time with his classmates.
- **We discourage individual "goodie bags" being given to classmates.**
- You will be notified of your child's "special day". These days are generally around his/her real birthday or if the birthday falls when school is not in session, it will be around the "half-birthday".

Sharing

- Once a month we have a share project. This will be a family project that goes with our theme for the month.

Class Observation

- Parents are welcome to visit the program at any time.
- Advance notice is appreciated so that we can make sure we are in the classroom when you come.



Field Trips and Guest Speakers

- Our outdoor curriculum will also include walks around our neighborhood and in our park.
- If we choose to go “off campus,” the City bus will be our usual means of transportation for field trips. Parents may be asked to help us at these times. There will be a sign up sheet.
- On occasion, we invite guests into the classroom to talk with children. Parents who would like to share their talents or vocation are always welcomed. Let us know if you have something to share.

Community

- It is important for your child to feel a part of the Tiny Tots Community. Events will be planned throughout the year to include families: Back to School Night Potluck, Pumpkin Patch Picnic, Butter and Eggs Day Parade, Grandparents Day, Cookie Exchange with Santa, Spring Fling and End of Year Party. Some of these events may not take place due to budget restrictions. Watch for upcoming notices.
- This is a fun and exciting time in your child’s life. We look forward to getting to know you and are here to help your child grow and learn.



Your Registration Form/Permission Slip lists pertinent health information that the staff needs.

Health & Safety

Dear My TinyTots Friends,
I love coming to school to see all of my friends.
I love going to the park and playing in the sand.
I like having centers on Fridays. I also like to look
at books in the reading corner and playing
pretend during lunch bunch.

Your Friend,
Lauren, 4 years old

For that reason, we ask that you complete this form when you enroll and return it immediately so that our staff can better know your child.

Throughout the year, we ask that you keep us informed in writing of any matters that concern your child's health or safety, especially changes of telephone number and for your child's safety, names of other adults to whom you permit your child to be released. These changes will be made on the permanent Registration Form/Permission Slip.

There are a few general rules we wish you to follow:

1. For your child's sake and those in his/her class, we ask that you keep your ill child home during any infectious condition. He/She should be fever free and have no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to class.
2. We are aware that a child's condition can change quickly, so we will call you if we believe he/she needs to be home. For this reason, please keep current the telephone numbers of those you wish us to call in these situations.
3. When your little one is not feeling well, the best place for him/her that day is at home with you.
4. It is necessary that your child be protected from the usual childhood illnesses by up-to-date vaccine immunizations. If your child does need immunizations, or necessary boosters, contact your doctor or the Public Health Department.
5. Please let the Tiny Tots staff know if your child contracts an infectious condition to which he/she has exposed his classmates (chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, impetigo, head lice, etc.). In that event, we will alert the other parents in writing.
6. We reserve the right to ask you to keep your child at home if it is for the protection of your child or other children in the class.
7. The Petaluma Community Center has policies for emergency safety measures in case of fire, flood, or earthquake. To be prepared in case of a real emergency, the staff and children practice drills throughout the year.
8. The Tiny Tots staff meets the qualifications for CPR and first aid requirements offered through the American Heart Association and/or the American Red Cross.



Registration & Payment Policies

PROGRAM DAYS, HOURS, FEES

Program	Day	Time	Enrollment	Fees
Tiny Tots	Tu, W, Th	9am-12noon	2 classes of 24 1:12 ratio	2 times/week: \$120/month
				3 times/week: \$175 month
KinderReady	M & F	9am-12noon	1:8 ratio	\$120/month
LunchBunch	Tu, W, Th	12pm – 1pm	1:12 ratio	\$20 for 4 visits

* Fees are reduced three times a year: in November for Thanksgiving break, in December for Winter break, and in March for Spring break.

Additional Fees

- KinderReady Curriculum: \$20, payable to the Director at the beginning of the school year.
- Late Pick Up: Please be prompt. There is a \$10 late fee for every 15 minutes parents are late.
- Refund: There is a \$10 processing fee for all refunds. Please see policy below.

Payments

- Payments are **due by the 15th of each month**. (If the 15th falls on a day our offices are closed, payments are due the following business day).
- If payments are not paid by the 15th, a \$25 late fee will be assessed.
- If you need to make special arrangements, you will need to speak to the Tiny Tots director.
- Payments can be made at the Petaluma Community Center, in the classroom, and online at www.cityofpetaluma.net/register

Holidays

- We will observe a combination of City holidays and Petaluma School District holidays.
- During the months of extended vacations (November, December, and March) a discount will be given.

Refunds

- Refunds are only given in case of serious illness.
- Refund requests are subject to approval by Director.

CALENDAR: 2011 - 2012

Aug 24 (wed)	Meet & Greet	Dec 23-Jan 6	Winter Holiday
Aug 29	First Day KinderReady	Jan 16	Martin Luther King Day
Aug 30	First Day Tiny Tots	Feb 17 & 20	President's Day
Sept 5	Labor Day Holiday	Mar 19-23	Spring Break
Nov 11	Veteran's Holiday	April 6&9	Extended Weekend
Nov 21-25	Thanksgiving Holiday	May 25	Last Day of Classes

*Holiday schedule is based on City Council Approved Holidays and school district holidays, dates are subject to change.