



Growing Tree  
Preschool

Parent Handbook  
2 ½ Year Old  
Preschool

2019-2020



Gurnee  
Park District

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## Preschool Philosophy

Welcome to the Gurnee Park District Growing Tree Preschool! Our goal and purpose is reflected in our Preschool Philosophy, and we are confident that the Gurnee Park District Preschool will aid in the growth and development of your child.

The Gurnee Park District mission is "Promoting Fun, and Preserving Nature, and our preschool philosophy carries forward that theme. In preschool our philosophy is to educate children through guided and free exploration in a play-based, creative and nurturing atmosphere. We believe that honoring and nurturing the individuality of each child will encourage respect for oneself and for others. We strive to develop a united common goal between families and preschool staff to build academic, social and self-help skills. Our ultimate goal is for children to love coming to school.

Our primary goal is to provide your child with the best possible preschool experience. We value the diversity of each family, and each child's individuality, and strive to build self-esteem and respect for others. We look forward to every day and the happiness we can bring to your child's learning experience.

## Parent Orientation Meeting

August 22

5:45-6:15p

Viking Park Community Center

4374 Old Grand Avenue

In consideration of others, **please do not bring your child(ren)** to the above meeting.

## Class Start Dates:

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

## Class End Dates:

Thursday, May 14, 2020

## Meet the Teachers

It is important that each child visit the classroom and meet their teachers and other children in their class before preschool begins. Children and parents should arrive at the start time listed below to explore the classroom and participate in a group activity

### Hunt Club Park

Tuesday/Thursday a.m. class

9/5

9:30a -10:15a

### Viking Park

Tuesday/Thursday a.m. class

9/5

10:30a -11:15a

## Important Phone Numbers

Gurnee Park District (Main Office)	(847) 623-7788
Hunt Club Preschool Room #4	(847) 599-5476
Viking Preschool Room #2	(847) 599-5492
Sue McDougle, Director	(847) 599-3767
Aimee Schneider, Coordinator	(847) 599-5499

## Program Locations

Hunt Club Community Center, Preschool Room #4  
920 N. Hunt Club Road  
Gurnee, IL 60031

Viking Park Community Center, Preschool Room #2  
4374 Old Grand Avenue  
Gurnee, IL 60031

## Entrance Requirements

To attend children must be 2.5 years old on or before September 1 or the first of the month they are scheduled to begin.

## Forms Required For Enrollment

All forms are due no later than **August 22, 2019**, and may be turned in at the parent orientation meeting or to the registration office at the location where your child will attend class.

1. Preschool Information Form 2019-2020 completed and signed.\*
2. Copy of Birth Certificate.\*
3. Certificate Child Health Examination Form\* listing necessary immunizations, signed and dated by the physician of record with the parent section completed and signed by parent.

Permission to Dispense Medication and Allergy Action form are needed for children with life-threatening allergies requiring medication.

\*If enrolling after August 22, 2019, your child may begin to attend class when all of the above forms have been received and the teachers have had an opportunity to become familiar with the contents.

Photography/video, for publicity purposes, may be taken during the program.

## Preparing Your Child for Class

Help your child understand that you will come back by leaving your child with a trusted adult. **Leave your child with a trusted adult at a location other than your home as many times as possible before school begins.**

Make sure your child understands the words/phrases (in English) that will be used in preschool:

- Mommy/Daddy always comes back
- Teacher
- No/yes
- Sit
- Wait
- Carpet (for circle time)
- Table/chair
- Wash hands
- Cubby (where your child will put belongings)
- Water bottle
- Later
- Listen
- Share
- Nice hands
- Quiet time
- Play time
- Do you have to go potty? (if independent using the bathroom)

## Adjusting To School

Because this class may be your child's first time participating in an activity without you, there may be a period of adjustment. Arriving too early or lingering too long in the classroom may cause your child to be anxious, nervous or unhappy when you leave.

- Tears do happen. This applies not only to your child, but to you as a parent. Talk to your child about going to school and the fun he/she will have with the other children.
- Be positive.
- Arrive on time. For those children who are upset, having *any* parent enter the room after the day has begun may start the tears flowing again.
- Have your child use the bathroom before entering the classroom. The classroom restroom is to be used during class time. If your child needs to be changed, there is a diaper station in the hallway restroom.
- Departing quickly allows the adjustment and school day to begin. Tell your child that you will return and understand that some children have to experience that you will come back before they can fully adjust.
- Your child may cry, cling, or seem upset when you leave, but this usually passes quickly or with time. Remaining with your child can extend the period of sadness and may cause a chain reaction with other children who realize a parent is still in the room. Once all parents have left and the class begins, the children can begin the process of adjustment. Engaging in an activity can help the crying stop.
- A comfort item (small stuffed animal) can be helpful at first.
- Parents are always welcome to remain in the building during class. If your child is upset,

it can be very emotional to remain outside the classroom. Please consider going to another part of the building or outside as your child adjusts.

- Please call the classroom, the preschool director or the preschool coordinator with any concerns. If the teachers are busy and cannot answer the phone, feel free to leave a message and your call will be returned.
- Be available by phone during the time your child is at class. If your child has a bathroom accident we must be able to reach you.
- By October 1 the teachers will be in contact with you if they feel that your child is not quite developmentally ready to make the adjustment to being in the class.

### Using the Bathroom at School

Toilet training is not required for this class. We do suggest having your child wear a pull-up if not toilet trained. Children this age may be learning to use the bathroom and may be excited to use the one in the classroom which is child sized. Please understand that if you send your child in underwear, they must independently know when they have to go, and manage pulling up/down their clothing, wiping and hand washing independently. We are unable to send children to the bathroom on a scheduled basis (i.e. every 10 minutes) but we will ask the children if they need to use the bathroom at least three times during the 2 hour class period.

### Drop off and Pick up Procedures

- Use the main entrance as the preschool entrance doors are locked at drop off and pick up time.
- The classroom door will open when class begins, and will be relocked 5 minutes later.
- Please be prompt!
- Park in the parking lot when you arrive to drop off and pick up your child. The drive in front of both community centers is a fire lane and is reserved for emergency vehicles, maintenance, and deliveries – please do not park in this area or the handicapped spaces.
- Arriving early or arriving late may cause anxiety in your child as well as other children in the class. For some children, **any** adult entering the room after the door has closed can cause tears, especially at the beginning of the school year.
- Dropping off your child late interrupts the flow of the class, and necessitates that a teacher step away from her role as teacher to let you and your child in.
- Only adults age 18 or older and listed on your child's Preschool Information Form will be allowed to pick up your child.
- Individuals picking up must be prepared to show a photo ID. You may send written notification if someone not on the list will be picking up your child on a particular day.
- Parents using car pools should list all authorized parents on each child's Information Form.

### What to Bring and Wear to School

- Backpack or tote bag.
- Reusable water bottle 1/2 filled with water for snack time.
- Complete set of extra clothes including socks.
- Children who are not fully toilet trained may wear a pull-up and can try to use the toilet
- Parents will be called during class time to change their child should a bowel movement occur.
- Children should wear clothing that is easy to pull up and down.
- No belts, overalls or multiple layers such as tights under pants.
- Closed-toe shoes (gym shoes) – no sandals, flip flops or Crocs.

## Learning Through Play

The goal of preschool for 2 ½ year olds is to help children learn to be without a parent or caregiver in a classroom setting, transition from one activity to another, follow directions, take turns and play cooperatively. Learning for children in this age range is episodic. The ideas change quickly, and activities vary with the moment. Within any single activity, such as digging in the sand table, the child may have numerous events that are educational. The child may discover, for example, that a spoon handle makes a different mark in the sand than the bowl of the spoon. Children may also learn that a playmate cannot see an object on their side of the sand bucket, or that play is more enjoyable when the sand toys and shovels are shared. All of these encounters are educational, add value to the child's knowledge base, and are an essential part of a classroom experience. Because of the experiential nature of the program, much of what the children learn in class cannot be taken home in their backpack.

Children learn through play and develop tangible skills socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. Not all children learn at the same rate and through the same process. Playing in a group environment is a very important part of learning at this time in your child's life. Certain behaviors are common among young children such as biting, pushing, and a limited ability to share and take turns. Please know that we will be working with the children to develop appropriate cooperative play.

## Social Skill Development

Our teachers strive to provide a happy and positive atmosphere in which children learn and grow. Sometimes children find themselves in situations that require redirection and reminders. We make every effort to keep children safe and happy, however, sometimes children need our guidance to help them with social situations. Please be aware that some children will react physically (biting, hitting, pushing, throwing objects), and verbally ("you're not my friend" "I don't like you") at this point in development, and we will correct the situation as soon as it arises. You will be informed of hitting/pushing/biting should these behaviors occur, or if there is a pattern of behavior about which we are concerned. We may ask for your suggestions and confer with you on specific ideas to help your child's social development, and may determine that your child is not developmentally ready to be in a classroom setting.

## Health Policy

We need your assistance to stop the spread of germs in our school. Please do not send your child to preschool if he or she exhibits any signs or symptoms of being ill, or after having been exposed to a contagious illness. If you are concerned that your child may be ill, please take him/her to the doctor **before** dropping off at preschool. The following may indicate that a child is developing a communicable disease: unusual paleness or flushed face, listlessness, red, watery, glassy or crusted eyes, sensitivity to light, skin rash, cough, nausea with or without vomiting, diarrhea, nasal discharge, headache, stomach ache, sore throat, or elevated temperature.

Children should not be brought to school for any reason until 24 hours after symptoms of the following disappear:

- Fever
- Infectious Disease
- Communicable Viruses or Bacterial Infections
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Children may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of an antibiotic is administered and when s/he is fever and symptom free for 24 hours *without* the use of Tylenol, Motrin or Advil.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease (such as: strep throat, pink eye, Impetigo or other rash, Rotavirus, etc.) and attended class within two (2) days of the diagnosis, please inform the classroom teacher. In turn we will inform other parents so they may be alerted to watch for symptoms, but we will not disclose your child's name. Please note: If your child has been in contact with a sibling or another child who has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, please consider not sending your child as they may be contagious but without symptoms.

If your child exhibits signs of illness or has a rash without a doctor's note while at preschool, you will be contacted to pick up your child as soon as possible.

If you are not available, the emergency contact(s) listed on the Preschool Information Form will be called. The child may be taken to the Early Childhood Office or an area away from contact with the other children. *The teachers or preschool director will make the final determination if a child should be sent home from school.*

If your child is injured or becomes ill while at preschool and requires more than first aid, the following steps will be taken:

- Contact the parent/caregiver/emergency contact.
- If possible, the child will be removed from the play area and given care. All staff members are trained in CPR/first aid/AED, classrooms are equipped with first aid kits, and portable kits are taken to the playground and other outside areas in case immediate care is needed.
- If necessary, an injured/ill child will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. A teacher will remain with the child until a parent arrives.

## **Discipline**

1-2-3 Magic model is used in our preschool classrooms and is a very useful and positive technique for preschool children. The environment in the classroom is developed so that children understand that everyone makes mistakes and acts inappropriately at times and the system is explained. Positive reinforcement is given to children engaged in appropriate and desirable behavior. Inappropriate or undesirable behavior is addressed simply in a soft voice with the first warning. If the behavior continues or is repeated, the child is prompted with a second warning. If the behavior occurs again, a consequence is given. The consequence can be different depending on the age of the child and the circumstances, and may include but is not limited to redirection or time out of an activity not to exceed the child's age.

## **Code of Conduct**

Children are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior while participating in programs and activities. A positive approach to discipline for children, specifically 1-2-3 Magic will be used in the preschool classes. Children who are a danger to themselves or others, whose behavior negatively affects the experience of others, use inappropriate language or actions, or who are physically violent or threatening may be dismissed from the program. The Gurnee Park District reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behavior, or that of his/her parent, is inappropriate, endangers the safety of self or others, and/or negatively impacts the experience of others.

## Emergency Closings

Go to [www.gurneeparkdistrict.com](http://www.gurneeparkdistrict.com) to see if preschool is closed due to weather or other emergency circumstances. Information will be posted by 7:00 a.m. for morning classes, and 11:00 a.m. for afternoon classes. It is always your discretion that determines if your child will attend in bad weather.

You may also use the Rainout Line. Go to [www.rainoutline.com/gurneeparkdistrict](http://www.rainoutline.com/gurneeparkdistrict) and click on Gurnee Park District and look for Emergency Closing Information. You will also find a link to this (water drop icon) on the footer of any of the Gurnee Park District webpages or search it by keyword on our website. To receive texts and notifications, you may download the Rainout Line App (free).

In the event that classes are cancelled, one day will be made up either on a previously scheduled day off (excluding winter and spring break), by extending the school day, or at the end of the school year.

## No Class Dates - 2019-2020 School Year – 2 ½ Year Old Classes

November 7	Conferences *
November 27	Thanksgiving
December 23-January 6	Winter Break (school resumes 1/7/20)
March 23-27	Spring Break

\* Parent/teacher conferences are not held with the 2 ½ year old classes.

Please note that snow/extreme weather days may be made up on the days listed above with the exception of winter and spring break.

## Other Important Dates

Parent Workshop – October 16, 6:30-8:00p “Tears, Tantrums and Battles: Preventing Power Struggles

Preschool Potluck Luncheon - families bring a dish to share - Hunt Club: November 12  
Preschool Potluck Luncheon - families bring a dish to share - Viking Park: November 14

Last day of class for Tuesday/Thursday classes: May 14, 2020

## Weekly Email, Classroom Email Correspondence, Home/School Folder

Parents will receive a weekly email recapping all classroom activities for that week and reminders for the upcoming week.

Each classroom has its own email address through which electronic correspondence will take place. This email address will be provided to you at Meet the Teachers along with the specific times of the day when email will be read and responded to by the teachers. Email is intended for parents to be able to ask basic questions about upcoming classroom activities. Issues that are specific to your child can be discussed on the phone or in person, but will not via email.

Your child will receive a two pocket home/school folder in which the teachers will put art work and other projects as well as written notes and reminders. Please be sure to empty your child's folder each day after school.

### **Class Information Lists**

Because of privacy concerns, we do not give out name, address, email and phone information for the students in our classes. However, you will have the opportunity to authorize the teachers to include this information on a class list that will be distributed to all students in your child's class who have also shared their contact information. We hope you will find this list helpful when contacting other families for play dates or mailing invitations to social events. Please note that the information on the class list may not be used to solicit or petition.

### **Playground/Large Motor Days**

Once the children have settled into the classroom routine we may schedule special playground or large motor activities during the last 15-20 minutes of class. Initially we may ask for parent volunteers to assist in this effort.

### **Look What I Can Do!**

The focus of our preschool for 2 ½ year olds is social development. As such, much of what your child will learn in the classroom cannot be sent home, but is instead about the experience of being with peers and teachers. You will receive a Look What I Can Do progress report in December and in May, and you may schedule a "check in" meeting with the teachers at any time. The program is designed as an initial preschool experience in a program that builds as the children progress from year to year. You and your child will have much to look forward to in the three and four year old preschool years!

### **Snack at School**

A light snack is served at preschool each day, and is provided by the Park District. Parents may choose to provide snack for the class however, the item must be from the list below. This is voluntary, and a sign up in each classroom is provided for this purpose.

The items listed in our Approved Snack List were chosen after meeting the USDA Smart Snacks in School criteria and an above average rating on Fooducate.com. These guidelines aim to reduce the sugar, saturated fat and salt content in children's snacks in addition to restricting items that contain high fructose corn syrup, MSG, artificial colors, additives or ingredients. The approved snack list is available at

[https://www.gurneeparkdistrict.com/images/approved\\_snack\\_list\\_2019-2020.pdf](https://www.gurneeparkdistrict.com/images/approved_snack_list_2019-2020.pdf)

### **Growing Tree Preschool's Peanut/Nut Aware Policy:**

Due to an increased number of children with life threatening allergies, our preschool classrooms are peanut/nut aware. We cannot accept food items that contain any type of nut. Prohibited are snacks that contain peanuts, peanut flour, peanut oil, almonds, coconuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts pistachios and walnuts. We cannot accept foods with ingredient labels that have statements such as "contains peanuts", "may contain traces of peanuts/nuts" or "manufactured in a facility or on equipment that also processes peanuts (and or other nuts)." Labels must be reviewed on a continual basis due to changes in manufacturer packaging. **Homemade treats cannot be accepted.** Thank you for your consideration and support in keeping snack time safe and fun

for all children. Please note that snacks and birthday treats provided must be from the approved lists. Goodie bags cannot be accepted. If you would like, you may send in one (1) non-edible item per child.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

Please be prompt at pick up time. Your child is expecting you and the anxiety of waiting can be distressing, and the teachers also need this time to prepare for the next class and eat lunch, or the room may be used for another class, a staff meeting or a conference. We understand that in rare instances emergencies may cause delays, so please call the appropriate number listed on page 4 to notify us. Your consideration is appreciated. A warning will be issued at the time of the first late pick up. Thereafter, you will be charged a \$10.00 late fee for every 1-15 minutes you or your authorized pick up person is late. Repeated late pick ups can result in dismissal from the program. Please park in the lot when dropping off or picking up. The area is directly in front of each building is a fire lane.

### **Payment Policy**

Participants will pay a \$75 non-refundable registration fee at the time of registration. The first tuition payment is due on July 15. If registering after July 15 the \$75 registration fee and one tuition payment will be due at the time of registration and, once paid, are non-refundable. Subsequent payments are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month beginning September 15 for the October tuition payment. Tuition is based on the **total number of days in the school year divided into nine equal installments and not on the number of school days in the month.** Tuition payments made after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month are subject to a \$10 late fee. Failure to make a tuition payment will result in the removal of the child from the class. Tuition must be paid in full by April 15, 2020. If a child is withdrawn at any time during the school year the registration fee and tuition are non-refundable. Tuition is not pro-rated for partial month attendance.

### **Payment Procedures**

#### Automatic Payment Accounts

Auto debit accounts do not receive an email statement until the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month when the credit card or ACH is debited.

#### Invoiced Accounts

Reminder statements are sent via email as a courtesy on the first of each month. Please check your spam or junk email. Monthly payments must be made on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Payments can be made in person at either the Viking Park or Hunt Club registration offices, by mail, phone or online by logging on to your account at <https://register.gurneeparkdistrict.com>, selecting "my account" and "pay old balances."

Teachers cannot accept tuition payments. All fees must be paid in full no later than April 15, 2019. Our Federal Tax ID Number is 36-2712925. Questions concerning billing? Call Kim McCormack at (847) 599-3751.

**We are looking forward to a wonderful year with your child!**