



SYCAMORE TREE

PRESCHOOL

1011 Veneta

Bremerton, WA 98337

360-792-2213

info@sycamoretreepreschool.org

www.sycamoretreepreschool.org

A CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Ages 18 months - 5 years

*A nurturing faith-based environment providing
affordable and appropriate early childhood education*

**Open to all boys and girls regardless
race, color, creed and religion.**

***this document is a work in progress and subject to change due to Covid-19**

ENROLLMENT FORMS

Enrollment forms are due on or before the first day of class.

BRIGHTWHEEL

The Sycamore Tree Preschool uses Brightwheel, an easy-to-use platform to keep you informed about important preschool news, updates, school closures, billing, tuition reminders, etc. Parents can reply in a threaded message to any communication from teachers or staff as well as send new messages to communicate late drop off, early pick up, and/or absent notifications.

RECRUITING BOARD MEMBERS

Our preschool board consists of church members, preschool parents and staff. We meet via zoom, the fourth Monday of each month (September—May except in December) at 6:30 p.m. The preschool board coordinates fundraisers, reviews the budget, and works together on facility improvements. If you are interested in volunteering, please let us know. This is a fun, easy way to support and get involved in your child's school.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

We approach all families with respect and by valuing differences. Our staff work hard to create a respectful and welcoming community in which all children, families, and teachers feel welcome and included. We embrace diversity in many forms - including but not limited to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, home language, country of origin, immigration status, ability, special needs, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, and cultural background.

A copy of this handbook can be found on our website at

www.sycamoretreepreschool.org

Follow Us on Facebook @
[Facebook.com/SycamoreTreePreschool](https://www.facebook.com/SycamoreTreePreschool)

SNOW DAYS

In cases of inclement weather, the Sycamore Tree Preschool follows the Bremerton School District. In the event of snow, listen to television announcements. If Bremerton schools close, we will close; if Bremerton schools have a one/two hour delay, we will cancel our morning classes; if Bremerton schools have an early dismissal due to heavy mid-day snow fall, we will cancel afternoon classes. Closures due to snow will not be made up.

INTRODUCTION

All staff members of the Sycamore Tree Preschool are experienced early childhood educators. The school is open to all children, regardless of race, nationality or creed, who may benefit from our type of program. The school is non-profit, non-sectarian, and non-political. Our program is license-exempt, however, we voluntarily comply with the Washington State Licensing Requirements. A copy of the state's minimum licensing requirements is located in the Parent Library or you can go online to www.del.wa.gov.

Staff/child ratios meet or exceed Washington State and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) requirements. At least two adults are present during each class.

In 1998 Sycamore Tree Preschool was selected as an exemplary program in a national search conducted by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. In a project endorsed by NAEYC, High/Scope has tried to identify quality programs which also provide good compensation for staff and affordable care for parents. We were picked as one of ten programs in several categories (non-profits with various funding levels, Head Start agencies, etc.) in this Program Recognition Project.

All we expect of children is that they come to school and be themselves.

We want parents to thoroughly read the operating procedures of this guide and the supplemental notes and newsletters that we send you from time to time. Parents and other visitors are invited to share arts/crafts, music, dress, and other stories of various cultures. Please feel free to be a part of the school, offering suggestions, comments, financial, and moral support.

Each spring parents will be given a family questionnaire to fill out and return. Forms are anonymous to guarantee confidentiality. This information will be used for future development of the program. Families will receive a copy of the final results. The Sycamore Tree Preschool is a ministry of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church but we do not instruct the children in any religious doctrine. We focus on the positive aspects of God's love in a caring, non-dogmatic way. Pastor Paul Meeker serves at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. Visitors are welcome to any church services. For additional information please contact OSLC at 360-479-6374.

STAFF

Andrea Campbell, Program Director

Courtney Weaver, Financial Manager; Teacher: T/TH Pre-K & T/TH Two's; Teacher asst MWF Pre-K

Emily Clark, Teacher: MWF Pre-K , MW Three's, T/TH Three's and Friday Walkabouts/Two's: Teacher Asst: T/TH Two's

Madison Roland, Teacher Assistant,: T/TH Pre-K

Jenny Waldbillig, Social Media/Auction Coordinator

Our staff was chosen on the basis of educational background, related experience, and personal qualities regardless of race, color, or creed.

PHILOSOPHY

At preschool, young children are given the opportunity to spend several quality hours outside the home with experienced, professional, caring teachers who create an environment that is stimulating and fun.

The program's philosophy is to provide children a loving, nurturing environment which recognizes the importance of helping them build a positive self-image through intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development. The program is based on current knowledge of child development and early childhood education.

As educators, we are aware that each child develops according to his or her own internal time clock. Therefore we gear ourselves to the child's individuality and encourage him or her in all areas of growth.

CURRICULUM

Our program may appear informal, but the curriculum and environment are the result of careful, detailed planning based on the best available knowledge of child growth and development. Young children learn best through activity and personal experimentation with toys, equipment and materials. We emphasize the process of doing and not the end product.

Learning centers are set up in the classroom, ie. writing table, art work materials, table activities (manipulative toys, matching, sorting, play dough, etc.), block area, library area, science table, sensory table, paint easel, creative dramatic area, etc. The ages of each class and individual children's interests affects the teachers selections for these centers.

The program is flexible allowing for "emergent curriculum" which follows the children's interests and lets them take the lead and pursue activities more in depth.

There is an indoor climber and slide for large muscle activity when inclement weather prevents outdoor play.

Age appropriate music, stories, games, fingerplays are a part of the daily activities.

And there is lots of time for social interaction. When problems arise the staff help children use problem solving language to resolve the situation.

Christian training is presented through music, prayer, stories and discussion. We teach that God is a good and loving God who cares for us all.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

The Pre-Kindergarten and Three year old classes conduct Family Conferences in May. Additional information will be sent home ahead of time. For the younger classes, teachers talk with families about child concerns and class activities before/after class or by phone. Parent/staff conferences are arranged for more serious concerns.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline for young children means guidance towards self-control. Discipline is learning. Discipline is helping. Discipline is guiding children toward control of their actions because they want to from within and not because they will be punished if they do not. Discipline is helping children make decisions and be responsible for their own behavior.

The booklet, "Developmentally Appropriate Guidance of Young Children" by the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children describes the principles of the Sycamore Tree Preschool discipline philosophy. Our discipline policy is posted on the kitchen bulletin board and the booklet is available in our Parent Library. The preschool has a detailed *Challenging Behavior and Referral Plan of Action Procedure Policy*.

TUITION (2024-25)

Tuition shall be set at an amount that will sufficiently cover the expenses of the program to enable it to remain self-sustaining with adequate reserves but without profit. For families with more than one child enrolled in the program there is a \$10.00 discount. Limited funds are available for partial scholarships to be used for children who would not be able to attend preschool without financial help.

Tuition payments can be paid online through Brightwheel. We also accept cash, check or online bill payments. Tuition is due the first week of each month, with a late charge of \$20.00 applied after the 10th of the month. A 30-day delinquency shall constitute grounds for dropping the child from the program. When you are paying with cash please wait for a receipt.

Two week notice is required if your child has to drop preschool. Notice should be given to the director. This is necessary so children on the waiting list can be notified that an opening is available. Pro-rated tuition refunds are available during a pre-paid month if a child is withdrawn with a two-week prior notice.

Monthly tuition:

Friday Walkabouts/Two's \$ 50.00

T/TH Two's \$125.00

M/W Three's \$125.00

T/TH Pre-K \$175.00

MWF Pre-K \$260.00

AGE ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

WALKABOUTS, children 18-30 months with a parent

TWOS, children born by August 31, 2022

THREES, children born by August 31, 2021

FOUR/FIVES, (Pre-K) children born by August 31, 2020

The preschool reserves the right to reassign children within available classes of the same teaching schedule.

The first month of school will be a probationary period for each child, to determine whether the preschool experience will be beneficial to the child. Decision to take the child out of preschool will be made in consultation with the parents, the teacher and the director.

IMMUNIZATION STATUS

Children attending preschool in Washington State are required to be vaccinated at the appropriate ages against polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, HIB, influenza and hepatitis B.

DAILY ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

Please arrange arrival time to be no earlier than the scheduled class time as the teachers need the time before class for preparation. Prompt pick-up of your child at the end of class is also necessary. Please notify us of any emergency or situations that occurs that may prevent you or someone else listed in our files from picking up your child on time.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than those listed in our information file unless the school is notified beforehand.

Always walk your child or your carpool children to and from the classroom. Occasionally a substitute teacher will be in the classroom and your presence may be needed to assure the child that "all is well", and to be sure that the teacher is aware that the child is present. If someone else is to call for your child, be sure to give the details to the teacher.

Please use the rear entry to the Preschool. (The city code does not allow us to use the preschool front door). **Park in the church parking lot and use the pathway behind the Fellowship hall.** The parking lot is often used as a road so children should be accompanied by an adult at all times.

ABSENCES

Please notify the teacher if your child will be absent from school for a long period of time due to illness or vacation.

Since the preschool is a non-profit organization and expenses go on whether a child is present or absent, parents are expected to pay full tuition if the absence is less than a month. If the child is gone for a month or longer, parents will have two options: (1) If they want to insure a place for their child when they return, they would pay tuition for their child. (2) If they do not pay tuition and there is someone on the waiting list, the vacancy would be filled. However, if their place has not been filled when they return, they may re-enter without paying an additional registration fee.

FIELD TRIPS

Special trips away from preschool will be scheduled throughout the year. Parents will be asked to assist on these excursions by providing transportation for their child and adult supervision as needed. Since your full attention will be needed with the class, child care arrangements need to be made for other children in the family.

CLOTHING

Comfortable play clothes are best for preschool. These should be clothes that encourage self-help and do not discourage participation in some of the messier activities, such as painting and gluing. Label all outer garments including hats and boots.

SICK POLICY

Please keep your child home when they are sick. This will prevent others from catching the illness. Children may return to school **24 HOURS AFTER:**

- * Fever, Diarrhea, Vomiting
- * Drainage from the eye.
- * Sore throat, especially associated with fever or swollen glands in the neck.
- * Rashes that are not associated with diapering or allergic reactions to food/medicine.
- * Appearance and behavior changes including unusual tiredness, paleness, lack of appetite, confusion and/or irritability.

“Just a mild cold is not necessarily a reason to keep a child home. Ear infections are not easily spread and children don't have to stay home with them after they feel better. Parents must make a judgment call based on how well the child is feeling and acting.” *Good Growing/Children's Hospital, Seattle.*

Practice good health habits by washing hands often, getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, eating nutritious foods, and drinking plenty of fluids!

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergencies happen. *A Crisis Management Plan* is in place and describes actions to be taken in an emergency and to make sure the children and staff at the Sycamore Tree Preschool are kept from harm. The safety and well-being of the children and staff will always take priority over all considerations.

In preparation for any emergency that may occur each family will be asked to fill out the "Emergency Authorization Form" and enclose it in a business size envelope with a family picture and a reassuring note from the parents/guardians.

The preschool has solar blankets, heavy duty plastic garbage bags (for use as ponchos), and supplies as part of our preparedness. Each class will be asked to send in specific supplies to replenish perishable items. Last year's supply will be donated to the Bremerton Food Bank..

ABUSE, NEGLECT, EXPLOITATION -

As early childhood educators, we are mandated by state law to report to the Department of Social and Health Services, Child Protective Services or a law enforcement agency any instance when there is cause to believe that child abuse, neglect or exploitation may have occurred. Your child's interest is always our top priority.

SNACKS -

Each family in Walkabout/Twos, Twos, and Three year old classes will be responsible for sending healthy, nutritious snacks approximately once each month. Parents are encouraged to send a healthy snack (related to their culture, if they like). Please let the teacher know if special arrangements are needed. All foods that are brought from home need to be either whole fruits/vegetables or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers. Snacks should consist of milk, water or 100% fruit juice (all juice served at the preschool must be pasteurized) and nutritious snack items for each child in the class. Suggested snacks are: apples, oranges, raisins, celery or carrot sticks, Jell-O, crackers, cheese, yogurt etc. Occasionally your child will have the opportunity to cook or otherwise prepare special foods at school for a snack and the teacher may ask that certain ingredients be sent.

We discourage cakes, cupcakes, or cookies unless it is to celebrate a birthday. If your child wishes to celebrate his/her birthday at school, please let the teacher know what your plans will be. If someone is signed up for snacks on that day, please contact that family and offer to trade days.

Fours/Pre-K children will bring their own lunch, but may bring a special treat to celebrate their birthday.

If your child has special dietary restrictions please send acceptable snacks to store in the cupboard for your child. Also please alert the staff as well as indicating the restrictions on the child's Emergency Information Form.

VISITOR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Parents and families are welcome to visit the classes at any time. When class is in session parents should slip in quietly to observe. Please visit with other parents should outside in the play yard or over at the church, so the class will not be disrupted.

We encourage parents to end phone calls before dropping off or picking up children.

“Be present with your beautiful child who is right in front of you.” Jes Rosenberg

Siblings and other family members may be invited to participate or help in the class if the class size is not compromised. This decision is left to the discretion of the teachers.

Due to liability and medical concerns, non-family children must be supervised by the accompanying adult and may not be left unattended for any reason.

No children will be allowed to visit the preschool and be left there by a parent unless specifically approved by the teacher beforehand.

ANIMAL AND PET POLICY

Caring for and interacting with pets at the Sycamore Tree Preschool is a special part of our preschool curriculum. It gives the teachers an opportunity to talk about life cycle issues including death. Children learn to care respectfully for creatures and are given the opportunity to nurture other living beings.

- Classroom pets and visiting animals need to be in good health.
- Pets and/or visiting animals must have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animals are fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected).
- Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.
- Staff makes sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal.
- Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk of salmonella infection.

ASSESSMENT POLICY

The purpose of assessment is to collect information on children's learning and development.

Assessment tools assist the teacher in gathering information on all areas of children's development and learning, including cognitive skills, language, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, health and physical development (including self-help skills). Assessments provide teachers with curriculum development and daily planning in the classroom.

Assessment begins at the moment we first meet a child. Children are assessed continually throughout the year with checkpoints in the fall and spring. Family Conferences are held once a year (and individually on an as needed basis) to celebrate children's learning. Conferences are a time for parents and teachers to share goals for children and to discuss a child's progress. If a teacher and/or parent has a concern a special conference can be scheduled. Teachers and families have the opportunity to meet and discuss their child's development through daily interactions, phone calls and written notes.

Our approach to assessment is to use a variety of tools, which include:

Observation-

- Anecdotal records
- Running records
- Checklist
- Photographs

Games-

- Individual/Group Rhyming Activities
- Color/Shape Recognition
- Number Recognition
- Letter Naming

Portfolios-

- Children's Work Sample

Interviews-

· Eliciting Responses · Question and Answers · Dictation · Charts · Quotes

Referrals

When needed, arrangements for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment is made through the family's local school district.

We consider all individual information in a child's records to be confidential and only available to staff. Staff do not share information or communicate assessment results with non-staff members. Each staff member is required to sign a statement of confidentiality that is a part of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

Families are encouraged to share their child's progress, accomplishments, and needs from home using a variety of methods. Formal methods include a Home Observation Questionnaire, Individual Educational Plan (IEP) (if applicable), therapist reports, doctor's orders, and health evaluations. Informal methods can be shared through daily conversations and written communication with staff.

The teachers will assess the children in a variety of settings (indoors, outdoors, large and small group). Only teachers that are familiar with the child will be involved in the assessment process. Due to the varying ages and stages of young children's development, some children may choose not to participate in all of the assessment activities. Assessments will be relevant to each child or adapted to each child.

The outcome of the assessment will be used to develop classroom and individual curriculum, and will meet the needs of individual children. The results of assessments will be shared with parents.

Assessment tools will be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that they are meeting the needs of children, parents and the program. We will use the NAEYC parent questionnaire and open feedback from parents to evaluate our assessment procedures and policies.

FUNDRAISING -

Each year the Sycamore Tree Preschool Board conducts fund raisers to help support some of the expenses of the program. Preschool families and friends are encouraged to help the board with "person power" and participation. Parents are encouraged to participate in our Fall Fundraiser, Chuck E. Cheese Family Fun Night, Silent Auction, McTakeover, and Stuff the Truck.

Our annual silent auction is held in March. Preschool families will be asked to participate by providing items and/or services for the auction and/or by making bids or contributions.

Start collecting items now, donations are accepted throughout the school year.

Visit our Silent Auction link at: www.sycamoretreepreschool.org/auction

Fundraisers keep the cost of our program affordable for families. Your participation is vital and your assistance is greatly appreciated!

FRED MEYER REWARDS CARD

Sign up for the Community Rewards program by linking your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to the Sycamore Tree Preschool at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for us by our name or by our non-profit number: **VA359**.

Every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping the Sycamore Tree Preschool earn a donation! We have earned **\$6277.33** since March 2014.

CLOTHING DONATIONS

We all have clothing that is no longer worn or no longer fits. Instead of discarding surplus clothing and household linens, give your clothes a second life by participating in our textile collection drive. What we can take: **Clothing, Shoes (paired only), Towels, Stuffed Animals, Hats, Sheets, Blankets, Quilts, BedSpreads, Drapes, Purses, Belts...** All items need to be kept dry, so please put them in a plastic bag that is tied tightly.

You can bring bags when you drop off your child.

We have earned \$14998.46 (Over 64,865 lbs.) since 1/2016

SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS OR GRIEVANCES

Our staff welcomes comments and suggestions to help improve the quality of our program. If you have a concern or a complaint, we ask that you contact your child's teacher so the problem can be resolved. If you feel the problem has not been resolved or if you have further concerns please contact the program director. Our program is committed to establishing partnerships with families, however, unanticipated difficulties or differences may arise that cannot be resolved through normal communication. In the event of an unresolved issue or conflict, a special conference or individual meetings can be set up to address the issue. Grievance forms are available and can be submitted to:

President of the Preschool Board
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
1015 Veneta Avenue
Bremerton, WA 98337

A FINAL NOTE

Parents are welcome to visit the preschool at any time.

Occasionally, Olympic College students or perspective families may be in the classroom to observe.

We look forward to an exciting and rewarding year with your child. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of the program, please contact Andrea Campbell, Program Director at 360-792-2213 or andrea@sycamoretreepreschool.org.

In accordance with Washington State Laws, tobacco use on school property is prohibited.

Firearms and dangerous weapons are prohibited on school property or at school-sponsored events.

Security cameras are to encourage safety of people and property.

Photographs and/or videos of Sycamore Tree Preschool children are not to be published or posted (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) without prior formal written approval from their parents and the Preschool Board of Directors.

Please take/end personal phone calls outside the preschool and during preschool sponsored events so you can be present for your child.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A NURSERY SCHOOL

From The Conspiracy Against Childhood

by Eda LeShan p. 130-134

1. I would want a child-oriented setting, which provides stimulation and opportunity for children to develop those skills that are appropriate to their age, needs and interests. There would be a great deal of equipment to encourage dramatic and imaginative play. There would be creative materials, such as paints and clay, to encourage expression of feelings. There would be equipment for releasing energy and vitality of young children, helping them to develop the large-muscle coordination they want and are ready for. It would be a place with space, with room to run and jump and move freely.
2. I would want a warm and accepting environment, peopled by teachers who know a great deal about the psychological needs of young children and can help them cope with their genuine struggle to become human - to be free and themselves but in a context of relating to others. I would want teachers who are ready to experiment, to explore, to let the child's curiosity and spirit of adventure lead to unplanned learning and discovery, where new questions are encouraged and answers found together.
3. I would want to know if the teachers are content to be with three and four year olds and see enough excitement in this - free of a terrible sense of urgency to turn these children into six and seven year olds.
4. I would want a school that is open to change and to new ideas but not easily swayed by the passing fashion of the moment. The teachers must feel free to experiment with new equipment, new methods, but only in the context of retaining critical judgment and preserving a basic philosophy that is well-balanced and clearly thought out.
5. I would want to see teachers who are not impressed by surface learning - who know that young children are wonderful mimics and can be taught to repeat information, but who know that this has nothing whatever to do with deeper understandings. I would want teachers who encourage a child to learn as much and as fast as he pleases, but who do not measure their own value or status by learning they can see - teachers who are satisfied with their work only when they know that what is being learned is meaningful and is meeting all the needs of a young child, whether or not the satisfaction can be measured or seen.
6. I would choose a school where children are on the move; where the program is flexible and relaxed enough so that children can begin to make their own decisions, where being quiet or active are choosable commodities most of the time. I do not want permission for chaos; there must be regulations and rules whenever groups of people try to live together. I want a room full of opportunities, where chatter and movement and changing interests and activities are not merely viewed as permissible, but are deliberately encouraged. Reasonable rules about safety and respect for property and the rights of others should be enforced by grown-ups who do not expect young children to be capable of self control all at once.
7. I would seek an environment in which children ask whatever questions they want and where teachers help children find their own answers; an environment where teachers are concerned about the child who always needs to be playing in a group as well as the child who never plays with others; about a child who never lets himself go and the child who is always at the mercy of his impulses and feelings.
8. I would want a school that is concerned with encouraging spontaneity and self-expression as well as with helping children learn ways to live comfortably and creatively with others respecting his own rights and the rights of others. Teachers in such a climate want to encourage each child to be different, to be himself, to find his own inner music, the things that will make his life significant to him; they want to help him solve whatever problems he may have that keep him from being unique and free.
9. I would look for a school in which teachers are not concerned with "raising I.Q's" but with raising a child's pleasure in the wonders of the world and the wonders within himself; where their goal is helping children live warmly and securely with others, both adults and children; helping each child to feel good about himself - to feel that he is a worthwhile and growing person; helping each child to

understand himself and others, to gain self-discipline and, most of all, to like the person he is becoming. Such a world let each child know that he has time to grow.