

Sycamore Tree Preschool

Handbook



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360-792-2213**

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<https://www.facebook.com/SycamoreTreePreschool>

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

Open to children
ages 18 months - 5 years.

INTRODUCTION & DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Sycamore Tree Preschool has been a fixture in Kitsap County since 1980. Our staff are experienced early childhood educators. They were chosen based on their educational background, related experience, and personal qualities. The school is open to all children, regardless of race, nationality, or creed, who may benefit from our type of program.

We approach all families with respect by valuing differences. Our staff works hard to create a welcoming community where children, families, and teachers feel included and valued. 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.

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.

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.

Sycamore Tree Preschool is a ministry of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, but we do not teach religious doctrine. We focus on the positive aspects of God's love in a caring, non-dogmatic way. Pastor Paul Meeker serves next door at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. Visitors are welcome to attend services. For additional information, please contact OSLC at 360-479-6374.

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

We ask parents to thoroughly read this handbook and the newsletters/messages sent throughout the upcoming year.

PHILOSOPHY

At preschool, children have the opportunity to spend several quality hours outside the home with experienced, professional, and caring teachers who create a stimulating, fun environment.

Our philosophy is to provide a loving and nurturing environment that helps children build a positive self-image through intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. The program is based on current knowledge of child development and early childhood education.

As educators, we recognize that each child develops at their own unique pace, guided by their internal time clock. Therefore, we nurture the child's individuality and encourage them in all areas of growth.

WHAT TO EXPECT

<p>Curriculum</p>	<p>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 experimentation with toys, equipment, and materials.</p> <p>We emphasize the process of doing and not the end product.</p> <p>Learning centers are set up in the classroom, i.e., 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.</p> <p>The ages of each class and individual children’s interests affect 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 in pursuing activities in greater depth.</p> <p>There is an indoor climber and slide for large muscle activity when inclement weather prevents outdoor play.</p> <p>Age-appropriate music, stories, games, and fingerplays are a part of the daily activities. And there is lots of time for social interaction. When problems arise, the staff helps children use problem-solving language to resolve the situation.</p> <p>Caring for and interacting with pets at the Sycamore Tree Preschool is a special part of our preschool curriculum. It gives teachers an opportunity to discuss life-cycle issues, including death. Children learn to care for creatures respectfully and to nurture other living beings.</p> <p>Through music and grace, we teach that God is loving and cares for us all.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Discipline in early childhood is guidance—not punishment. At preschool, discipline means helping young children learn <i>self-control</i> and <i>responsibility</i> in ways that support their growth. Guidance is a learning process. It teaches children to manage their actions because they understand what’s expected and want to make positive choices from within. Effective guidance helps children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize their feelings and actions • Understand how their behavior affects others • Practice making thoughtful decisions • Build internal motivation to do what is safe, kind, and respectful <p>Our goal is to support children as they learn to navigate their world with confidence, empathy, and increasing independence. Discipline becomes not something done <i>to</i> a child, but learned <i>with</i> them.</p>

<p>Tuition & Enrollment</p>	<p>For families with more than one child enrolled in the program, there is a \$10.00 discount.</p> <p>Limited funds may be available for partial scholarships for children who would not be able to attend preschool without financial assistance.</p> <p>Tuition payments are accepted online through Brightwheel, by cash or check, or via online bill payment. When paying with cash, please wait for a receipt.</p> <p>Tuition is due the first week of each month. A late charge of \$20.00 will be applied after the 10th of the month. A 30-day delinquency shall result in the child being dropped from the program.</p> <p>A two-week notice to the preschool director is required if you decide to withdraw your student from preschool. Pro-rated tuition refunds are available during a prepaid month if a child is withdrawn with two weeks' prior notice.</p> <p>The first month of school will be a probationary period for each child to determine whether the preschool experience will be beneficial. Decisions to withdraw the child from preschool will be made in consultation with the parents, the teacher, and the director.</p> <p>The preschool reserves the right to reassign children within available classes of the same teaching schedule.</p>
<p>Clothing</p>	<p>Comfortable play clothes are best for preschool. Their clothing should encourage self-help and exploration in messier activities, such as painting and gluing.</p> <p>Label backpack/lunchbox and all outer garments, including hats/boots.</p>

<p>Arrival & Pick-Up</p>	<p>Please use the rear entry to the Preschool. (City code does not allow use of the front door.) Park in the church parking lot and use the pathway behind the Fellowship Hall. Children should always be accompanied by an adult.</p> <p>Arrival time to be no earlier than the scheduled class time, as the teachers need time for class preparation.</p> <p>Always walk your child/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." Be sure that the teacher is aware that the child is present.</p> <p>Prompt pick-up of your child at the end of class is necessary.</p> <p>Please notify us of any emergency or situation that may prevent you or someone listed in our file from picking up your child on time. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than those listed in your file.</p> <p>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</p> <p>After classes, helping sweep rocks off the sidewalks, picking up toys, and tidying the borrowing library would be greatly appreciated!</p>
<p>Snacks</p>	<p>Pre-K Children will bring their own lunch, but for birthday celebrations, may bring a special treat (store-bought, in a sealed package) to share with the class.</p> <p>Walkabout/Twos, Twos, and Threes will bring in healthy snacks for the class about once per month on a rotational schedule. Snacks related to your culture are welcome. Please notify the teacher in advance if special arrangements are needed. All foods must be whole fruits/vegetables or commercially prepared, packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Snacks should consist of milk, water, or 100% fruit juice (juice must be pasteurized). Suggested snacks include apples, oranges, raisins, celery, carrots, Jell-O, crackers, cheese, and yogurt. We encourage you to save doughnuts, cupcakes, or cookies for birthdays/holidays. If your child wishes to celebrate his/her birthday at school, please advise the teacher of your plans. If someone else is signed up for snacks on that day, please contact that family and offer to trade days.</p> <p>If your child has special dietary restrictions, please send acceptable snacks to store in the cupboard for your child. Please alert the staff & indicate the restrictions on the child's Emergency Information Form.</p>

<p>Parent Teacher Conference</p>	<p>The Pre-K and Three's classes conduct Family Conferences in May. Additional information will be sent home in advance.</p> <p>For the Two's & Walkabout classes, teachers talk with families about child concerns and class activities before/after class. Parent/Staff conferences can be arranged for more serious concerns.</p>
<p>Photo Policy</p>	<p>Photographs/Videos of Sycamore Tree Preschool children are not to be published or posted (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, etc.) without prior formal written approval from their parents and the Preschool Board of Directors.</p>
<p>Absences</p>	<p>Please notify the teacher if your child will be absent from school, especially for a longer period due to illness or vacation.</p> <p>Payment of the full tuition is required if the absence is less than a month.</p> <p>If the child is gone for a month or longer, to ensure a place for the child upon returning, pay full tuition. If tuition is not paid and a child is on the waiting list, the vacancy would be filled. However, if their place has not been filled by the time they return, they may re-enter without paying an additional registration fee.</p> <p>The preschool is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, and expenses continue during absences.</p>
<p>Sick Policy</p>	<p>Practice good health habits by washing hands often, getting plenty of sleep, being physically active, eating nutritious foods, and drinking water.</p> <p>Please keep your children home when they are sick.</p> <p>Children may return to school 24 hours AFTER the following symptoms have fully resolved, provided they have been fever-free and symptom-free without the use of medication during that time: Fever, Diarrhea, Vomiting, Drainage from the Eye, Sore Throat, Rashes of unknown origin. Including Appearance and Behavior changes such as unusual tiredness, paleness, lack of appetite, confusion, irritability.</p> <p>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 Hep B.</p>

When is your child too sick for school?

School attendance is a powerful predictor of school success and on-time graduation. Research shows that when students miss fewer than 10% of their school days, they have much stronger success in school. Use these tips to tell when your child is too sick to attend school.

Send your child to school if they...



Don't feel great but are able to participate in normal activities.

Keep your child home if they...



Feel sick and have a fever of 100.4°F or higher, test positive for flu or COVID-19, or can't participate in normal activities.

Have thrown up in the past 24 hours.



Have diarrhea and increased stool frequency.

Have a rash of unknown origin. They can return to school when a healthcare provider says it's okay.



Have an oozing sore or wound you can't cover or contain.

Call a healthcare provider if they...



Have a fever of 100.4°F or higher for more than 2 days.

Throw up or have diarrhea for more than 2 days.



Have the sniffles for more than a week and aren't getting better.

Have asthma symptoms after using asthma medicine. If they have trouble breathing after using an inhaler, call 911.



This is general guidance. Schools, healthcare providers, or the Health Department may advise differently based on individual circumstances.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Adapted from Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department in partnership with the WA State Department of Health

<p>Visitor Policy</p>	<p>Parents and other visitors are invited to share arts/crafts, music, dress, and stories of various cultures. Please feel free to be part of the school and offer suggestions, comments, financial support, and moral support.</p> <p>Parents are welcome to visit the classes at any time. When class is in session, parents/guardians should slip in quietly to observe.</p> <p>Please keep visiting with other parents outside in the play yard or over at the church, so the class will not be disrupted.</p> <p>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 the teacher has specifically approved it beforehand.</p> <p>Occasionally, Olympic College students or prospective families may be in the classroom to observe.</p>
<p>Field Trips</p>	<p>Special trips away from preschool may be scheduled throughout the year. Parents will be asked to provide transportation and supervision for their child. Since your full attention will be needed with the class, childcare arrangements need to be made for other children in the family.</p>
<p>Snow Days</p>	<p>In cases of inclement weather/snow, Sycamore Tree Preschool follows the Bremerton School District. Listen to the news; if Bremerton schools close, we will close. If Bremerton schools have a one or two-hour delay, we will cancel our morning classes. If Bremerton schools have an early dismissal due to heavy midday snowfall, we will cancel afternoon classes. Snow-related closures will not be made up.</p>
<p>Emergency Prep/Plan</p>	<p>A Crisis Management Plan is in place and outlines actions to be taken in an emergency to ensure that the children and staff at the Sycamore Tree Preschool are kept safe. The safety and well-being of the children and staff will always take priority over all considerations.</p> <p>In preparation, each family will be asked to complete the "Emergency Authorization Form" and enclose it in a business-size envelope with a family photo and a reassuring note from the parents/guardians.</p> <p>The preschool has emergency kits/supplies as part of our preparedness. Each class will be asked to send in specific supplies to replenish items.</p>

Assessment & Referral

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 guidance for curriculum development and daily classroom planning. The teachers will assess the children in a variety of settings (indoors, outdoors, large and small groups). Only teachers who are familiar with the child will be involved in the assessment process.

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 as needed) 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. Teachers and families have the opportunity to meet and discuss their child's development through daily interactions 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

Due to the varying ages and developmental stages of young children, some may choose not to participate in all assessment activities. Assessments will be adapted to each child.

When needed, arrangements for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment can be 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 confidentiality statement as 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), therapist reports, doctor's orders, and health evaluations.

Assessment tools will be evaluated annually to ensure they meet the needs of children, parents, and the program. We also use the NAEYC parent questionnaire to gather feedback and evaluate our assessment procedures and policies.

<p>Safety</p>	<p>In accordance with Washington State Laws, tobacco use on school property is prohibited.</p> <p>Firearms and dangerous weapons are prohibited on school property and at school-sponsored events.</p> <p>Security cameras are used to ensure the safety of people and property.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Comments, Concerns, Grievances</p>	<p>Our staff welcomes comments and suggestions to help improve the quality of our program.</p> <p>If you have a concern, please contact your child's teacher so the issue can be resolved.</p> <p>If you feel the problem has not been resolved or if you have further concerns, please contact the program director.</p> <p>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 scheduled to address it.</p> <p>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</p>

A copy of this handbook can be found on our website at www.sycamoretreepreschool.org

COMMUNICATION

Program Director: Andrea Campbell

We look forward to an exciting and rewarding year with your child!
If you have questions regarding any aspect of the program, please reach out.

360-792-2213
andrea@sycamoretreepreschool.org

Brightwheel

We use the Brightwheel app to keep you informed about important preschool news, updates, school closures, billing, tuition reminders, etc.

Parents can reply to any communication sent by staff. You can also send messages to communicate late drop off, early pick up, and/or absences.

Facebook

For preschool news, fundraiser updates, and more, follow us at

[facebook.com/SycamoreTreePreschool](https://www.facebook.com/SycamoreTreePreschool)

Board Meetings

Our preschool board consists of church members, preschool parents, and staff. We meet, typically on Zoom, on the fourth Monday of the month (Sept - June, except Dec) at 6:30pm. The board coordinates fundraisers, reviews the budget, and works together on facility improvements. If you are interested in volunteering with minimal time commitment, please let us know. This is a fun and easy way to support your child's school and get involved.

Feedback

In spring, each family will receive a questionnaire to fill out and return. Forms are anonymous for confidentiality. This information will be used for future development of the program. A copy of the final results will be provided to each family.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Sycamore Tree Preschool conducts several fundraisers throughout the school year.
Fundraisers keep our program affordable.

Your participation in the following events is vital, and your assistance is greatly appreciated!

- Fall Fundraiser
- Chuck E Cheese Family Fun Night
- Silent Auction
- Mctakeover
- Stuff the Truck

Amazon Wishlist



Support classes by shopping our supply list on Amazon.

Clothing Drive Fundraiser Stuff the Truck

Instead of discarding surplus clothing and household linens, give them a second life!

Unneeded clothing, paired shoes, towels, stuffed animals, hats, sheets, blankets, curtains, purses, belts, etc. can be donated to Sycamore Tree Preschool's clothing drive.

Keep items dry; place them in a tightly tied plastic bag. You can drop bags off at school when you drop off your child.

Every pound of "soft goods" we gather raises funds for Sycamore Tree Preschool!

Fred Meyer Community Rewards



Sign up for FM Community Rewards! Every time you shop, you earn a donation for Sycamore Tree! Search by our name or non-profit number:
VA359

Thrivent

Personal donations to Sycamore Tree can be made through Thrivent's online giving platform at any time.

Thrivent covers any processing fees, so 100% of the donation goes to our organization!



Thrivent Choice Dollars



Thrivent clients with membership: Don't forget to direct your annual Choice Dollars® to Sycamore Tree Preschool by March 31st at thrivent.com/thriventchoice.

Through Thrivent Choice, clients with membership can contribute to organizations they care about and influence how Thrivent distributes some of its charitable grant funding through Choice Dollars.



Silent Auction

Our annual Silent Auction is held in March. Our biggest and most anticipated fundraiser of the year!

We ask families to participate by donating items, gift cards, or services for the auction.

Donations are welcome anytime!

We also invite families to attend the auction and place bids. Stop in while your kids are in class! Invite your friends and family to join in!

Follow us on Facebook for auction updates.

Questions?

DM Jenny, Auction Coordinator, through our Facebook page or call Andrea 360-792-2213

For details, a list of business donors, and pictures from the previous auction ... scan the QR code.



Another way to help ...

YOU are invited to join our preschool board!

(details under the heading, Communication)

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 whatsoever to do with deeper understanding. 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 [their] own rights and the rights of others. Teachers in such a climate want to encourage each child to be different, to be [themselves], to find [their] own inner music, the things that will make [their] life significant to [them]; they want to help [them] solve whatever problems [they] may have that keep [them] from being unique and free. [updated to inclusive language]
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 lets each child know that he has time to grow.