**Monkey Tree Learning Center**

**Parent Handbook**

**of Policies and Procedures**



500 N Columbia River Hwy, Suite 450

St Helens, OR 97051

503-410-5158

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Areas of development

Language & Literacy

Books, songs and activities help children become comfortable with language and grow their vocabulary.

#### Social-Emotional

Children start to develop basic self-help skills and begin to socialize by engaging in parallel play.

#### Creative Expression

Toddlers sing songs, move to music, and develop fine motor skills by painting and drawing.

#### Mathematics

Toddlers begin to recognize shapes, colors and numbers through toys, games and basic puzzles.

#### Wellness

Toddlers make major strides in balance, coordination and fine motor skills during their very active days.

Welcome to Monkey Tree Learning Center!

Our Philosophy at Monkey Tree Learning Center is to provide welcoming, child-centered classrooms, promoting freedom, independence and opportunities to make safe, independent, free choices. We believe a child’s whole learning experience involves all aspects of their life; parents, teachers and community working together to help your child have the best start in life.

Our center combines positive learning experiences and structured play in a fun, safe and nurturing environment specifically designed for each developmental age & ability. Offering far more than just childcare, we help children discover, explore and learn to their fullest potential. We believe that in order for your children to fully thrive in a Preschool environment, that it is important for us to provide consistency with who they see everyday as their teacher. In order to do this, we station the same teachers in each department (Infants, Wobblers, Ones, Twos, Preschool and Pre-K), so that the child meets with the same caretaker everyday. Naturally, there are days when a teacher will be sick or on vacation, in this case we will make sure that their secondary caretaker is another face they are familiar with. We are fully staffed to ensure this happens and train our teachers according to their department.

Our enthusiastic teachers care about the children in our center, and understand each child’s individual developmental needs and learning styles. They take the time to help each child discover, in his or her own way, a fascinating world of play and learning. We promote open communication between staff, parents and children to provide ongoing continuity both in the center and beyond our doors.

We are dedicated to informing parents of what we are teaching your children each day so that you may continue conversation and learning at home. We encourage conversations with our teachers and management regarding the curriculum and daily activities and we also encourage you to check your child’s classroom’s Parent board to keep you informed as to what is happening daily in your child’s class. Information on books and songs that your children are learning are readily available to you to continue at home as well.

Monkey Tree Learning Center prides ourselves in parent and community collaboration and communication. We work with Early intervention, Child welfare, TANF, ERDC and surrounding community supports to give every child a equal opportunity in their hometown. We believe that children deserve an equal opportunity to learning and quality childcare.

Monkey Tree Learning Center will collaborate with Mental Health, School Supports, Developmental Disabilities, Parents and DHS to support children with behavioral, Mental Health or Developmental Disabilities so they can maintain a community based daycare and preschool.

Monkey Tree Learning Center is an all inclusive full service Childcare and Preschool.

Our infant and Wobblers play and learn at a self-determined pace. Our teachers spend time engaging in 1:1 play, encouraging parallel play, singing and dancing in a comfortable classroom environment that allows for individual sleep and feeding schedules determined by each child and parent.

Toddlers have many opportunities to physically explore their world inside the classroom and on the playground. They also begin more structured activities, such as learning centers and circle time. Your toddler will begin learning concepts of color and size, and will build their vocabulary.

Our preschool program provides opportunity to explore and participate in dramatic play. The majority of our preschool curriculum is centered between 8 and 11 am but is carried out throughout the day. Your child will learn to recognize letters and some letter sounds, words, animals, shapes and colors. They will learn skills for basic counting and sorting. Preschoolers begin to understand the concept of yesterday, today and tomorrow, seasons, months, etc...

Our Pre-Kindergarten program prepares children for kindergarten by teaching foundational literacy and basic math skills. Children learn letter-sound relationships, sight word recognition, introductory writing skills and basic mathematical functions. We continue to nurture important social and emotional skills such as listening, following directions, understanding feelings and resolving conflicts in an age appropriate manner. The majority of our structured Pre-K curriculum is centered between 9 and 11 am but is also carried out throughout the day. Monkey Tree uses Preschool Premise Edition -- as our curriculum for all ages.

**Deposit:**

A non-refundable $100 deposit/registration fee is due upon enrollment in the program. This deposit will hold your child's spot in the program for one month. Holding a spot longer than one month is at the provider's discretion and must be discussed. If you change your mind about your child attending Monkey Tree Learning Center, the deposit will not be refunded.

**Tuition:**

See current Rate sheet for a breakdown of costs based on your child’s age and number of days per week he/she attends. Your specific tuition will be outlined in your conversation at enrollment. These rates are for contracted days and will not be prorated. Additional hours or days must be approved by the provider and are billed at the drop in rate when space is available. For rotating schedules we allow “calendar” tuition to be billed. Tuition is to be paid in full monthly on the first day of the month prior to your child's care or half paid on the first of the month and half on the 15th. Payment may be made by cash, automatic withdrawal, debit/credit card, or check made payable to Monkey Tree Learning Center. Automatic withdrawal is set for the 1st and 15th. Any alteration to this will result in the loss of the discount and a $2.50 processing fee. Declined Credit cards incur a $5 fee the first time, and increase for subsequent declines. Returned Checks are a $40 fee per item. Accounts past due (balance owing after the 20th of the month) will be charged a late fee of $35. Additional late fees may be added if payment terms are not followed. Reminder: Care will not be provided without payment and your child may be removed from the roster. You may request to receive a receipt/statement each month, however a statement outlining all of your payments throughout the year is given at the end of the calendar year for tax purposes. Tuition Rates include breakfast before 7:45am, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack and a late PM snack (provided the child is in attendance during the times food is served).

**Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance,**

**therefore, no credit is provided for absences due to illness or other times the child is not in attendance.** The provider reserves the right to revise the rates. A 30- day written notice of any rate change will be given to parents prior to its implementation.

Each family is allotted two weeks of vacation time per calendar year. When electing to use one or two weeks of vacation, you must inform management with two weeks prior notice. Management will prorate your bill to reflect a 1 week or two week credit. This policy covers a full tuition based week.

**Enrollment:**

At your initial interview, you will be given an application packet containing the handbook and other informational forms. Return the application, the $100 deposit PRIOR to first day of care. Be sure to indicate on the application, the approximate first date of attendance on the forms and days of the week that you are requesting care. Once the application and registration fee are submitted, we will ensure your child is on the classroom roster for your start date. Enrollment is not guaranteed without the deposit paid upfront. Please also provide the following information needed for your child BY the first day of care: emergency contact information, medical information, copy of child’s insurance card, immunization records and any specific care instructions, such as Allergies, medical conditions to be aware of, or requests of the teacher’s for your child’s care. Care instructions will go directly in the child’s classroom for reference. **The first month's fees, along with all the completed supplementary forms and a copy of the child's immunization records, are due on your child's first day at Monkey Tree Learning Center. Licensing rules dictate that care cannot be provided without the appropriate paperwork on file.** It is the parents' responsibility to update forms as necessary, i.e. new round of vaccinations, change of phone number or employer, prescription update, etc.

If your child does not attend 5 or more consecutive scheduled days, management reserves the right to remove your child from the roster and be placed on a drop in/when space is available basis. Please communicate with Management on absences, we are willing to work with you on extended leaves from care.

**Drop-Off/Pick-Up Times:**

Monkey Tree Learning Center is open 6am to 6:30 pm, Monday – Friday. Our drop off cut off time of 10:30 am applies to ALL classrooms (except infants, Wobbs and School Age). This cut off time is to ensure a successful transition for your child and other children in the classroom from outside play, to lunch and then rest/nap time. If you need an exception to this policy due to a scheduled Doctor’s appointment or other matter, please discuss this with management and notify your child’s teacher. It is required that you or an authorized adult accompany your child inside and to the classroom at arrival and departure time. It is the parents' responsibility to deposit and retrieve their child’s belongings to and from the cubby each day. This helps to settle your child in for their stay at Monkey Tree and shows your child that you care about his space.

**Late Pick-up Fees:**

After the agreed departure time, parents will be charged

$5.00 per child for the first 10 min and $2 per additional minute. The same applies if a child is dropped off before the center opens. We understand that circumstances occasionally prevent a parent from

arriving on time to pick up his/her child. In such instances, please notify us as early as possible so both your child and the caregiver can be advised and arrangements can be made to provide care after the center’s closure time. (The late fee is still charged if you notify us that you will be late.)

**Holidays:**

Monkey Tree Learning Center will be closed for the observance of the following holidays:

New Year's Day, President’s Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Payment for these holidays is still due when the holiday falls on a contracted day your child would normally be in care.

**Communication Policy:**

Communication between parents and the provider is essential if your child is to receive consistent, nurturing care. When we accept a new family into our center, we like to be sure that we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that there is a similar childcare philosophy between us. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that affect a positive outcome for the child. Your child will be happy to have the experience of the special people in his/ her life working together and getting along with each other. This will allow your child to develop a sense of security and will allow us to develop a closer relationship. We are happy to work with you regarding any special needs or situations with your child. Any information you share with us will remain strictly confidential and among staff to provide quality care.

Children's work is sent home in your child's mailbox. Please be sure to check this daily so you do not miss important information. Menus are posted in the entryway. Monkey Tree has an open door policy and parents are welcome anytime during their child's day.

Upon enrollment, we invite you to join our private parent page on Facebook where we share your child’s day with you. Ask management to be invited to this page. This page is a perfect communication tool to inform staff if you are keeping your child home for the day, running late, etc. You may also call us at 503-410-5158 or email at monkeytreelearningcenter@gmail.com.

**Termination of Care:**

We are committed to working with children and their families so that each child's experience is positive and rewarding. When circumstances prevent a child's needs from being met at the center or when a child's behavior is having a consistently negative effect on the well-being and development of other children, it may be decided to terminate that child's enrollment. Care may also be terminated under the following conditions:

* Failure to provide the required forms for enrollment
* Non-payment of childcare fees or late fees
* Non-compliance with policies and procedures
* Consistently bringing sick children to care or failing to notify the provider when a child is staying home sick
* A child is consistently putting the safety of themselves or other children or staff at risk.

Parents must give a two week written notice (14 calendar days) when terminating childcare services. If a two-week written notice is not given, the parent will pay for two weeks of care in lieu of notice. A two week notice is also required if reducing the number of days per week that care is requested. If two weeks is not given, the parent will still be billed the current tuition amount for two weeks before the tuition amount is reduced.

# **Items from Home:**

# Bringing things from home (toys, coins, jewelry with small pieces) is strongly discouraged - except for naptime necessities, which will be kept in the child's cubby. These things get lost, broken, may pose a choking hazard, and tend to cause a distraction in class. Blankets and pillows used for naptime are requested to be taken home every week for laundering. Monkey Tree assumes no responsibility for any items that your child does bring to Monkey Tree.

# **What to Wear:**

Children should come to Monkey Tree Learning Center dressed in appropriately sized and durable play clothes. This program is designed to keep children active and engaged. We take reasonable precautions to keep the children as clean as possible and keep their clothing from becoming damaged. Please bring a labeled change of clothing (underwear, socks, pants, and shirt) as well as rain boots and a reasonable coat to keep your child dry and warm. Daily outdoor activity is very important for young children and is a regularly planned daily activity. A child who is well enough to be in care is well enough to play outdoors. This provides the fresh air and movement needed daily for your child's general well being and healthy development. You can help your child enjoy outdoor activities by making sure that he/she is properly dressed for the weather. In cold weather, this includes warm coat, sweater, mittens and hat. In warmer weather, this includes shorts, sandals and sunscreen (please make sure you have filled out a medical release form so that Monkey Tree Staff can legally apply sunscreen to your child). Children play outside every day unless weather is inclement (below freezing, or over 100). In the Pacific Northwest, often we have drizzly weather and we do our best to get outside every day. Please provide boots and a water-repellent coat for those days.

**Child Illness Policy**:

Communicable illnesses are very common in childcare settings. Here at Monkey Tree, we strive to keep the children safe and healthy; therefore we must adhere to a strict illness policy. Please notify the provider at least one-half hour prior, if not sooner, to the usual arrival time in the event your child will stay home sick, or is going to be late for whatever reason. The operating expenses for Monkey Tree are the same whether your child attends or not therefore, no deductions in the monthly fee will be made for sick days. We apologize for any inconvenience this causes. State Guidelines and the State Health Department regulations prohibit the admittance of ill children into a childcare center. A child cannot be brought to the center if he or she is displaying, or has displayed within the last 24 hours:

* + A fever of 100.4 or 99.4 (under the arm): Any fever greater than 100.4 F. May return after 24 hours when temperature decreases without use of fever-reducing medicine.
	+ Excessive Diarrhea: Three or more watery or loose stools in 24 hours OR sudden onset of loose stools. May return when resolved for a 24 hour period.
	+ Vomiting: At least 1 episode that is unexplained in the past 24 hours. May return when resolved for 24 hours.
	+ Or symptoms of any communicable disease (rash, sore throat with swollen glands, severe coughing, eye discharge, yellowish skin or eyes, green or yellow or clear and thick runny nose).
	+ Or if the child is irritable, continuously crying or requires more attention than we can provide without endangering the health and safety of other children in our care.
	+ Children may attend with common cold symptoms (clear, watery, runny nose, happy and playful, no fever), but if the symptoms persist or your child requires more attention than the staff is able to provide safely, you will be asked to come get your child. IF symptoms persist for more than the usual 7- 10 days or are worsening, you will be asked to remove your child and seek medical attention to be sure a secondary infection has not set in.

If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be called to come pick him/ her up immediately. You must also keep your child home until they are symptom free for 24 hours unmedicated. Although it may seem inconvenient when your child is sent home, you will appreciate knowing your child's exposure is minimized when other children become ill.

# **Medication:**

When medication is to be administered by the provider, the medication must be in its original container, clearly labeled, sealed in a Ziploc baggie with the child's name on it, and given directly to the provider. Please do not leave medication of any kind in a diaper bag or the child's cubby. A medication permission form is required by the state for all medications, including prescription and non-prescription. Please be prepared to fill out this form at drop-off. We cannot give any medication of any kind without one.

# **Injuries:**

Every attempt will be made to ensure that your child will be in a safe environment, but no matter how much we monitor conditions, accidents do occur. In the event of a serious accident, you will be contacted for instructions. If you or your emergency contact person is unable to be reached, emergency actions and/or whatever means is necessary will be taken in order to provide the best care for the health of your child. All incidents and accidents will be documented on an accident report with your signature and the teacher's signature.

# **Infants:**

Per state law, all infants are to sleep on their backs, in the manner recommended by the SIDS Alliance and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Infants may be put down to sleep in another manner, however must be transferred to their backs within 10 minutes of falling asleep. Exceptions to this policy are made only under the direction of the infant's pediatrician. Diapers are checked/ changed every 2-3 hours, sooner if soiled.

Infants are fed on demand, unless you provide a schedule, however state law requires we offer food at least every 3 ½ hours.

Per state law, all children under the age of 36 months AND in a classroom with children under 36 months old, are no longer allowed to sleep with blankets while in the center. We have transitioned fully to utilizing sleep sacks and fitted crib sheets for naptime in order to meet safety requirements. You may provide your own to be placed in your child’s cubby or purchase one from Monkey Tree Learning Center.

**Meals and Snacks:**

Monkey Tree Learning Center will supply each child with breakfast before 7:45 am, a morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, and a late PM snack except baby cereal/food and formula. You are welcome to provide your child a nutritious snack or lunch. A store-bought treat may be provided for your child's Birthday or special occasion when first cleared with the provider. Mealtimes and food menus are listed on the welcome board in the entryway.. Please keep in mind that if you do supply your child's lunch or snacks and they do not meet the USDA guidelines, Monkey Tree staff is required to supplement any dietary requirement lacking.

**Special Health Needs**

If there are any additional health issues that your child will need assistance with, please provide us a with a detailed description on the condition and what we can do to accommodate your family. If it is a serious health need, please provide a Doctor’s note describing the health concern and our specific role in supplementing care for your child.

# **Toilet Training and General Bathroom Practices:**

The most ideal setting for toilet training is probably at home for a week or two of 1:1 with Mom and /or Dad. But for most of us, that ideal isn't feasible. Monkey Tree is willing and ready to mimic your potty training efforts at home.  Therefore, for practical reasons, but especially for sanitation reasons, we have adopted the following policy/criteria: FREQUENCY - we will help and encourage and take your child to potty at reasonable intervals (arrival, mid-morning,before lunch, before nap, after nap, etc.....). While in training, your child must wear pull-ups until he or she can announce that he or she needs to use the bathroom and is for the most part accident-free. Due to sanitary reasons, the advanced potty training children need to wear underwear and pants, we cannot accommodate the naked philosophy. Please be sure to bring multiple changes of clothes to accommodate accidents throughout the day so that we can avoid placing a pull up or diaper on your child. Staff will have to use a pull up or diaper if the child soils all spare clothes that were brought to the center. It is also state policy that potty chairs are not allowed in the center. We do have child sized toilet seats for child in their classrooms. This is an exciting time - let's work together to make it successful!

As for general bathroom/diapering practices, our teachers and aides are trained to reinforce the frequency of bathroom visits and sanitary practices with the children. Each classroom has a bathroom cleanliness poster that illustrates for the children what they are to accomplish each time they use the restroom. Our teachers and aides are also trained on sanitary practices with diapering procedures. To ensure it is always followed, we also have diaper changing posters up in every classroom, which illustrate how to safely and cleanly change diapers, the child and the changing pad.

# **Nap and Rest Time:**

All children participate in rest or naptime in the afternoon. Each child will have a rest mat (or pack 'n play for infants and wobblers) and will be encouraged to rest quietly. Each child may bring a small pillow, crib-sized sheet and blanket for rest time.

Children are welcome to bring security objects from home if needed during nap time.

# **Touch Policy:**

Before being provisionally certified, each provider reads and signs a statement saying that they have read and understand the Monkey Tree touch policy. This policy outlines appropriate and inappropriate touch as follows:

Appropriate touch includes:

* + Hugs, hand holding, and lap sitting (ages six and under only).
	+ Reassuring touch on the shoulder.
	+ Naptime back rubs to relax a tense child (kindergartners & younger only).
	+ Diapering of infants and toddlers.
	+ Assistance in toileting for children when needed.

Inappropriate touch includes:

* + Forceful holding of a child in a chair or squeezing a child's hand with sufficient force to cause pain as a way to change behavior.
	+ Forced good-bye kisses.
	+ Corporal punishment (spanking).
	+ Sexual exploitation (fondling or molestation).
	+ Hitting, pinching or in any way physically assaulting a child.
	+ Prolonged tickling.

The *only* time a child will be restrained in ANY fashion is when a child is endangering the health or safety of themselves or others. Confirmed violation of our touch policy will result in immediate dismissal of the provider.

**Discipline and Redirection:**

The philosophy of a child-centered classroom, with its freedom, independence and opportunities to make choices, does not overlook the importance of discipline. Safety and respect for the rights and feelings of others need to be incorporated into any method of discipline. Discipline for infants is a matter of safety. There is no such thing as a bad or naughty baby. They do not understand rules or consequences. A safe environment is provided to prevent problems by:

* Removing and keeping the child away from harmful areas
* Saying "no" in a calm but firm manner when s/he is in danger

# Child-proofing areas where infants play. Toddlers are beginning to understand simple directions, but they are unable to remember things, so rules are repeated frequently. Because the toddler is struggling to understand his/her world, s/he often exhibits acceptable behavior with unacceptable objects; i.e. throwing blocks.

# Safety procedures used with infants are used with toddlers as well:

# Keeping things out of reach

# Removing him/her from frustrating situations.

# Talking to him/ her about his/her feelings and giving him/her words to express those feelings

# Redirecting attention

# Focus on "do's" instead of "don'ts" and outline for them how to handle the situation in a better way. Telling a child what "not to do" does not prepare him/her for what "to do" in the future.

# Give a choice. It is important for children to learn to make decisions.

# Explaining a more appropriate behavior ("blocks are for building." Or "keep the blocks on the floor, please. You can throw a ball when we go outside."

Preschool and school age children are better able to understand and more readily remember rules and consequences. The children are reminded of what is expected of them at all times. When children know what is expected of them, problems are less likely to occur. The basic rules are:

* Walk while inside or "walking feet"
* Use nice hands
* Use "inside voices"
* Use polite words
* Be kind to our friends
* Use manners
* Use toys respectfully
* Follow directions

When a problem does occur, positive methods of discipline are used in a quiet, calm manner. These methods encourage self-control, self -direction and cooperation. The methods used are:

* Redirect attention
* Focus on "dos" instead of "don’t’s."
* Explain a more appropriate behavior.
* Have child sit in time-out, if necessary, to gain control of  him/ herself

When attempts at behavior modification continue to be unsuccessful, the child may be removed and sent to another classroom or the office. We will conference with the parents to work together on possible solutions.

**Smoke Free Environment Policy**

At Monkey Tree Learning Center, we are committed to providing a smoke-free environment for children, staff members, and child care providers. Due to hazards from exposure to secondhand smoke, it shall be the policy of this child care facility to provide a tobacco-free environment for children, staff members, child care providers, and parents. All hired staff will be made aware of approved smoking zones and safety procedures before entering a classroom.

**Weapon Free Environment Policy**

Weapons of any sort are prohibited in the center. If a weapon is found, the child will be suspended for one week. If this occurs more than once, the child will be unenrolled. If an incidence does occur, Monkey Tree Learning Center will contact law enforcement immediately and parents will be notified.

**Acknowledgement of Receipt**

I have received a copy of the Parent Handbook for Monkey Tree Learning Center on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

I understand that I am being asked to review the information contained within, and that I may raise any questions that I have about the stated policies with the Director or HR Manager.

I understand and agree to follow the policies and procedures as stated in this Parent Handbook. I understand that I am responsible for ensuring that any person authorized to act on my behalf for my child understands the policies and procedures stated in this handbook. I understand that failure to adhere to the policies of the handbook may result in my child’s enrollment being discontinued by Monkey Tree Learning Center.

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that I need to give a two week notice when terminating care or reducing my child’s number of days at Monkey Tree.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that my child needs to be in by 10:30 am when coming to Monkey Tree so that transitions for my child and the class go well.**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I am late to pick up my child (past 6:30 pm) I will be charged late fees. (stated in the handbook)**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if my tuition is not paid within the payment terms (listed in the handbook), I will be charged late fees.**

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Parent Signature Date

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Print Parent Name Print Child’s Name

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Director/HR Manager Signature Date