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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is Mount Tabor Preschool?**

MTP is a developmentally appropriate, play-based, cooperative preschool, serving Portland since 1951. We endeavor to provide a wide variety of experiences to accommodate children's interests and needs as individuals and as members of a group. We provide opportunities that stimulate social skills and promote self-esteem. We are not affiliated with Mount Tabor Presbyterian Church, where our preschool is located. Mt Tabor Preschool is an Eco-Healthy Child Care program certified by the Oregon Environmental Council.

### **How old do children have to be to attend Mt. Tabor Preschool?**

There are three classes: the Junior Class is for children ages 3-4, the Senior Class is for children ages 4-5 and the Pre-Kindergarten Class is for children ages 4 ½-6. If your child will turn three on or before October 1st of the school year, he or she can enroll in the Junior Class. If your child will turn four on or before October 1st of the school year, she or he can join the Senior Class. If your child will turn five on or before April 1st of the school year, she or he can join the Pre-Kindergarten Class.

### **When are classes held?**

The Junior Class attends preschool on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to noon. The Senior Class attends preschool on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30pm. The Pre-Kindergarten Class attends preschool on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 1:00 p.m to 4:00 p.m. The school year begins in September, one week after Portland Public Schools begin. School ends the week prior to Memorial Day in May.

### **How much does it cost?**

Tuition for the 2019-2020 school year is \$167/month for Juniors, \$253/month for Seniors and \$383/month for Pre-Kindergarteners. A small increase is subject to approval by our general membership each spring. Tuition is due on the 1st day of each month. Upon registration, each family pays the first and last months' tuition. Each family also pays a one-time enrollment fee (\$95), as well as a start-up fee for class supplies, field trips, and emergency food & first aid supplies (\$108). Tuition assistance is available to those that qualify. Tuition assistance forms can be found on our website.

### **What about class size?**

In general, the Junior Class enrolls approximately 16 students, while the Senior Class has up to 18 students. The Pre-Kindergarten Class enrolls up to 12 students. One professional teacher and 2-3 parent volunteers staff each class session for the Juniors and the Seniors, with an approximate 1:5 ratio for the Junior Class and a 1:6 ratio for the Senior Class. One professional teacher and one parent volunteer staffs each class session for the Pre-Kindergarten Class with a 1:6 ratio.

### **What happens at the preschool during a typical class day?**

For Juniors and Seniors: The day begins with 'free choice' time, during which children are free to choose any area of the classroom in which to play or create. The Senior Class partakes of a snack during this time. After clean up, the kids meet with Teacher Amy on the carpet for circle time. At the end of circle time, Junior Class children take a bathroom break and wash hands prior to eating snack, and Senior Class children prepare to go outside. After snack, the kids gather together briefly for singing and stories, then either go outside or to the 'big room' (outside is always preferred) for gross motor play. The group then returns to the classroom, for 'closing circle time'. You may refer to the daily schedules in the Member Handbook section of our website.

For Pre-Kindergarten: The day begins with meeting Teacher Amy on the carpet for circle time where she will greet the students and explain the subject or focus for the day. The class will then break into two small groups where one group will have 'free choice' during which children are free to choose any area in the classroom to play, explore and create and the other half will meet with Teacher Amy for small group instructional time. The instructional curriculum is designed around children's interests and constructivist teaching practices which encourage them to predict and experiment. The children will then switch groups. After this time they will have a small healthy snack, spend some time outside and then will return to the classroom for 'closing circle time'.

### **How does enrollment work?**

We begin accepting enrollment applications on September 1st. The application fee is \$20. Alumni families receive enrollment priority. We hold a lottery in February to assign spots for the following fall. Families are notified immediately if they have a spot or are put on the waitlist. After the lottery enrollment process, students will be admitted in the order that applications are received until the classes are full. An enrollment fee of \$95 is due to confirm acceptance of enrollment. We will create and maintain a wait list over the summer and for the duration of the school year. We seek to achieve gender-balanced classes, so at times one gender may be admitted before the other to reach this goal.

### **If my child is enrolled, what will I need to do as a co-op preschool parent?**

There are six main responsibilities for each family: Tuition, Fundraising, Parent Helping in the classroom, a Preschool Job, Community Hours and attendance at General Membership Meetings.

### **Will I need to help in the classroom?**

Yes, you get to see your child learn, grow, and interact socially by helping in the classroom. All family members who will work in the classroom must complete a criminal history background check and attend an orientation session prior to the beginning of the school year. Classroom helpers schedule their turns to participate in the classroom bi-monthly. Schedules of helping days are maintained and updated throughout the year by the Class Rep. for each class.

### **How often will I help in the classroom?**

There are two parent helpers for each school day for Juniors and Seniors and one parent helper per school day for the Pre-Kindergarten class, each with an alternate scheduled in case one of the scheduled helpers has an emergency that prevents her or him from coming to school. With 16 kids in the Junior Class, each family will be scheduled to work twice and be an alternate once every 16 school days (approximately once every four weeks). With 18 children in the Senior Class, each family will be scheduled to work twice and be an alternate once every 18 school days (approximately once every three weeks). With 12 children in the Pre-Kindergarten Class, each family will be scheduled to work one and be an alternate once every 12 school days (approximately once every 3 weeks).

### **What will I do as a parent helper in the classroom?**

Parent helpers play a vital role in the classroom. Under the direction of the teacher, facilitating a safe and enjoyable experience for children will be your first priority. You will be expected to be attentive to and engaged with the children. You will help with projects, read stories, and ask and answer questions to extend children's learning. Parent helpers assist children when they require help, facilitate problem solving, and are generally available to aid the children and teacher. Each day the parent helpers brings the day's snack (either a fruit/vegetable or carb/protein - Pre-Kindergarten parents will bring both a fruit/vegetable and carb/protein), come early to help set up the classroom, prepare and serve the snack, and help clean up after school in preparation for the next school day.

### **What sort of fundraising activities take place?**

Our program is able to offer affordable tuition in large part through the support of member families in our fundraising efforts. Every member family is expected to participate in fundraising--but for the most part, it's FUN! We sell Chinook Books and put our children's artwork on wine bottles in the fall, and our annual auction is in the spring. In addition, there are occasionally other fundraising activities such as buy-in classroom parties and restaurant "dine out" nights that members may participate in as they are able.

### **What is a preschool job?**

As a cooperative preschool, MTP relies on its parents to keep the preschool running! Our teacher, Amy Watson, is the only official employee of the preschool. She has been the teacher at MTP since 2004. All the other jobs that need to get done - board positions, maintenance, managing parent helper schedules, planning events, and fundraising activities, just to name a few – are done by the preschool parents. Upon enrollment you will have an opportunity to indicate three job preferences, and from those preferences your job assignment will be made. You'll receive information explaining your assigned job, an orientation (if necessary), and on-the-job training. Amy and the Job Coordinator are always available for guidance and to answer questions.

### **How often are the General Membership Meetings?**

There is a General Membership Meeting almost every month of the school year. The meetings are typically held on Tuesday evenings, occurring shortly after the Board Meetings. In December the preschool hosts a holiday party for families, and in January, parents attend a kick-off party for the Fundraising Auction in lieu of General Meetings.

### **How can I find out more about Mt. Tabor Preschool?**

Please visit our website! You'll find our Membership Handbook, which is sure to answer many questions you may have. There is also a listing of parent jobs, our school philosophy, information about Teacher Amy, and much, much more at [www.mttaborpreschool.org](http://www.mttaborpreschool.org). You may arrange for a brief visit to the preschool during school hours to see it "in action". Please contact our Membership Coordinator for available dates and times at 503-592-0775 or [membership@mttaborpreschool.org](mailto:membership@mttaborpreschool.org).

*Mt. Tabor Preschool values diversity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, socioeconomic status, family structure, disability, or national and/or ethnic origin.*