



**MT. TABOR**  
**PRESCHOOL**

# Member Handbook

Drafted by Amy Watson

Updated August 2022

Mt. Tabor Preschool 5441 S.E. Belmont Street Portland, OR 97215

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# Welcome!

You and your child are endeavoring on a wonderful early childhood adventure! We are so excited to work together to create a memorable and meaningful experience. We want you to feel at home at Mt. Tabor Preschool as your family participates in our program. We will do our best to help you feel comfortable and confident as you act as a Teacher Helper in the classroom. Included in this handbook is a wealth of information about our school, guidelines and responsibilities for Member Families, and resources provided by your child's teacher. Please feel free to ask questions and seek clarification if you or your child need help finding your place.

## Our Cooperative Preschool

Mt. Tabor Preschool was created in 1951. Originally named the Mt. Tabor Mother's Club, it began as a small effort by a group of neighbors to give their children something to do away from home a couple of times per week. At first, the mothers taught the children in a room at Glencoe Elementary School, but after a few years, the school began hiring teachers and moved into the basement of the Education Wing of Mt. Tabor Presbyterian Church at SE 54th and Belmont Avenues. In 2011 after sixty years in our old classroom, we moved into our current, beautiful space in the Russell Wing.

The concerns of those early mothers were no different from those of parents today--to offer their children an opportunity to interact with other children, to begin developing the skills necessary for success in school, and to just let kids be kids. The school has traditionally offered a gently structured environment in which children could explore and learn at their own pace. That play based tradition, centered on the Piaget model, is still in place today.

A cooperative preschool is organized and administered by the parents and operated under the direction of a professional teacher. Its success depends upon the cooperative efforts of all members. A co-op operates most effectively when parents and teachers work together, pooling their knowledge and resources in the best interest of the children. This being said, you are entrusting your child to the care and expertise of the professional teacher who oversees and directs parent volunteers, and sets the tone for the day to day rhythm of each class.

Families are an integral part of the school, as they have been since the school's earliest years, giving their time and talents by serving as board members or on committees, as teacher helpers in the classroom, by participating in fundraising activities, and by attending monthly general meetings. Guardians of enrolled children are members of Mt. Tabor Preschool, Inc. and Mt. Tabor Preschool is a member of Parent Child Preschool Organizations (PCPO).

# Our School Philosophy

At Mt. Tabor Preschool, our mission is to create a community for families to come together and work alongside an experienced teacher to provide an inclusive, child-directed, play-based education.

As parents and educators, we trust children to know what they need and are ready for developmentally. Children are first-hand learners—they learn by doing, and use their senses to explore their world. We strive to provide children with a wide variety of opportunities and experiences to support and enhance the natural interests and curiosities that grow from within them. If we provide the following, children will learn, grow, and develop in all areas necessary for them to progress naturally:

...

- An interesting and stimulating environment;
- An emotionally safe place where children feel comfortable and free to ask questions, take risks, make mistakes, and try new things;
- Materials and activities which provide opportunities for exploration and experimentation;
- Time to play, time to be active, time to sing, time to dance, time to slow down and take it all in, time to be cuddled and read to, time to be alone, and time to be with the group;
- Supportive, compassionate and understanding adults who *really* listen and provide encouragement, when needed, to overcome challenges and frustrations; and,
- A time, place, and a supportive community where it's all about being a little kid.

Within our school, we strive to create a safe and nurturing place where each person is treated fairly and with respect. Our primary goal is for each child to have a positive early education experience in which she/he may gain the skills and confidence necessary to build friendships, work autonomously and collaboratively, and feel a sense of belonging. The emphasis is *not* on “school readiness”, but rather on working with children *where they are now* in their development. Our hope is that the children will find joy in learning and being together that will stay in their hearts for the rest of their lives.

Parental support and education are important aspects of our preschool. A cooperative preschool provides parents and other loved ones with opportunities to participate with, to observe, and to learn about their child. We hope that as the children learn new skills and progress developmentally, that you will also experience growth as a parent.

You will hear it said again and again, “*You get out of it what you put into it.*”

# Teaching Philosophy

As a teacher of young children, I strive to provide developmentally appropriate programs in a warm, supportive, and respectful environment. In our classroom, children are given opportunities to grow and learn cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically, both as individuals and as members of a group. I base my philosophy upon the concept that children construct knowledge through their interactions with both the physical and social world. I feel that my role as a teacher is to responsively and thoughtfully facilitate children's interactions with their environment, and with others.

My broad, long term goals include helping children to:

- Become increasingly autonomous and independent, developing self-discipline and thoughtful, responsible judgment;
- Feel competent and productive, having positive self-esteem and a sense of self-worth;
- Develop responsibility for their own mental and physical health and well being;
- Recognize and appreciate the riches human differences bring to our world;
- Discover and value their individual gifts and creative talents, and
- Develop higher moral reasoning and the ability to understand natural consequences through the construction of an internalized code of ethics and principles.

Another part of my role as the teacher is to assist children in the development of skills needed to relate to peers and others in appropriate, constructive, and emotionally respectful ways. I work to help children develop the confidence and ability to work out their *own* solutions to problems. My hope is that each child will grow in their capacity for self-discipline, their ability to empathize with and advocate for others, and in their ability to internalize appropriate behavior for themselves.

In acknowledging that parents, as the primary educators of their child, are the most important source of information concerning their child, I invite open, thoughtful communication between home, school, and the community. I respect and believe in each child as a unique individual with the ability to construct knowledge about his or herself, others, and the world around them through active learning. I strive to promote growth in all areas of development for all children by providing them with meaningful opportunities to interact, experiment, explore, question, and play.

Amy Watson

# Jr. Class Schedule

9:30	<b>Children Arrive at Preschool</b> Sign-in, put belongings in cubbies, greet friends, the teacher and parent helpers, and say goodbye to parents.
9:30-10:20	<b>Free-Choice Time in the Classroom</b> Children engage themselves in planned, as well as spontaneous, child-initiated activities & work in the classroom learning centers.
10:20-10:30	<b>Clean-up Time</b> Everyone helps to clean up and we transition to the carpet
10:30-10:45	<b>Circle Time</b> We gather as a group to read books, tell stories, sing, share, solve problems, play group games, do science experiments, etc.
10:45-10:50	<b>Bathroom Break</b> Use the bathroom and wash hands with adult supervision
10:50-11:05	<b>Snack Time</b> We sit down together to share a healthy, nutritious snack.
11:05-11:35	<b>Large Motor Play (AKA: Recess!)</b> We play outside or in the Big Room
11:35-11:45	<b>Goodbye Circle Time</b> We share about our morning together, calendar, Letter of the Week & sing our Goodbye Song
12:00	<b>End of School Day - Children Leave</b> Children leave with parents/caregivers or transition to after-school classes.

\* This schedule is subject to change based on children's needs and interests, weather conditions, special activities, etc.

# Sr. Class Schedule

9:30	<b>Children Arrive at Preschool</b> Sign-in, put belongings in cubbies, greet friends, the teacher and parent helpers, and say goodbye to parents.
9:30-10:45	<b>Free-Choice Time in the Classroom</b> Children engage themselves in planned, as well as spontaneous, child-initiated activities & work in the classroom learning centers.
10:00-10:30	<b>*Snack Time*</b> A snack is available to children to take a break from play and eat when they are hungry. All children are expected to eat some snack each day unless a parent excuses them.
10:45-10:55	<b>Clean-up Time</b> Everyone helps to clean up and we transition to the carpet
10:55-11:00	<b>Bathroom Break</b> Use the bathroom and wash hands with adult supervision
11:00-11:20	<b>Circle Time</b> We gather as a group to read books, tell stories, sing, share, solve problems, play group games, do science experiments, etc.
11:20-11:50	<b>Large Motor Play (AKA: Recess!)</b> We play outside or in the Big Room
11:50-12:00	<b>Hand Washing &amp; Prep for Lunch</b>
12:00-12:20	<b>Lunchtime</b>
12:20-12:30	<b>Goodbye Circle Time</b> Share about our morning together, calendar, Letter of the Week & sing our Goodbye Song
12:30	<b>End of School Day - Children Leave</b> Children leave w/ parents/caregivers or transition to after-school classes.

\* This schedule is subject to change based on children's needs and interests, weather conditions, special activities, etc.

# Pre-K Class Schedule

1:00	<b>Children Arrive at Preschool</b> Sign-in, put belongings in cubbies, greet friends, the teacher and parent helpers, and say goodbye to parents.
1:10 - 1:30	<b>Class Meeting</b> Welcome song, news and sharing, Inquiry of the Day, divide info
1:30 - 2:00	<b>Free Choice Time + 1st Small Group</b> Half the class is free to play in the classroom while the other half meets with Teacher Amy for small group time.
2:00 - 2:30	<b>Free Choice Time + 2nd Small Group</b> The groups switch and the second group meets with Teacher Amy for small group time.
2:30 - 3:00	<b>Free Choice and Snack Time</b> Both groups merge for free play and a snack is made available.
3:00 - 3:20	<b>Clean-up Time</b> Everyone helps to clean up and we transition to the carpet.
3:00 - 3:30	<b>Circle Time</b> We'll revisit our inquiry, calendar, letter of the week, journal, and plan for the next school day.
3:30-4:00	<b>Large Motor Play (AKA: Recess!)</b> We play outside or inside where building space is available.
4:00	<b>End of School Day - Children Leave</b> Children leave w/ parents/caregivers.

\* This schedule is subject to change based on children's needs and interests, weather conditions, special activities, etc.

# Curriculum

Early childhood education practice and research have found that a child's emotional, social, and cognitive development are interdependent. Our program encourages positive peer and social relations, development of critical thinking skills, and facilitates the development of self-esteem by fostering independence and problem-solving skills by providing children with opportunities to experiment, explore, question and play.

Our curriculum is both *emergent* and *constructive*. This means that classroom themes, projects and activities often emerge from the children's interests or from events in the classroom day or community. We further believe that children construct their knowledge rather than merely receiving it from adults. Children have questions and things that they wonder about. Adults strive to provide the means for children to discover the answers. Children construct their own ideas and theories about their world through play and social interaction, and through experimentation and exploration. The teacher observes and plans carefully to enhance and extend children's learning. The teacher generally plans for a week at a time. The teacher welcomes parents to contribute to the curriculum by suggesting activities or by facilitating projects while Parent Helping. The teacher will share the classroom activities and emergent themes with our community through monthly newsletters as well as through occasional documentation—pictures and words—that will allow everyone to follow the classroom events as well as the learning process. Throughout the curriculum, children's emerging interests in writing, reading and numbers are strongly supported and encouraged.

If the group has a particular interest at the time, the teacher will plan activities and group gatherings around that theme. The teacher may introduce songs, read books, present pictures, and provide materials to support the children's interest for as long as it is an interest. Sometimes this may mean a day or two; sometimes the group may become engrossed for a longer period of time.

The classroom is set up with learning centers as well as planned, adult-directed activities. Learning centers include arts, language arts, math & manipulatives, building and construction, science, and dramatic play. The classroom is organized with materials available at children's level to encourage maximum independence. The daily classroom schedule includes large blocks of time in which children, with support from adults, make their own choices about how to use their time.

Each day, the following are typically provided:

- An art activity—almost always process, not product, oriented
- An activity that supports collaboration— such as a game or puzzle
- Something tactile for manipulation— i.e. playdough, flubber, ooblech, etc.

- A logical-mathematical activity– i.e. manipulatives for weighing, sorting, etc.
- A literacy activity– i.e. story writing, pattern building, shape tracing, etc.
- Something in the sensory-table to scoop, pour, strain, etc.
- Some sort of gross motor activity, i.e. hopscotch, beanbag toss, fishing, etc.

Most activities are self-guided, with some requiring adult-assistance, such as messy art projects, cooking projects, games with rules, etc. These activities are in addition to the materials available in the room on a daily basis. In addition, we recognize that some days, things just don't go according to plan. The teacher's agenda (or lesson plans) are pointless if children have no interest in a planned activity. I accept this and am willing to be flexible in order to provide an activity that the *children* want to do that day. I also feel it is important to express that in all of my planning, it is vital to us to present unbiased materials and adequate supplies to ensure the comfort and success of anyone who may participate in an activity.

## Anti-Bias Curriculum

In addition to attending to the developmental needs of the child in areas of social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth, I am also committed to incorporating non-sexist, multicultural, and anti-bias learning experiences into our daily curriculum. I continually strive to provide materials, activities and an environment that reflect a respect for, and celebration of, diversity in race and ethnicity, physical appearance and ability, and family composition and lifestyle. My goal is for every child and family to feel welcomed and supported in our school.

### Anti-bias curriculum:

- Fosters each child's sense of self-identity
- Fosters acceptance of diversity among people by allowing children to ask about and explore differences
- Encourages critical thinking about bias by helping children to identify acts of discrimination and stereotypical images in their world
- Fosters each child's ability to stand up for her/himself and others in the face of bias.

We avoid sex-role stereotyping in the classroom. We want all children in our school to feel strong and capable, as well as gentle and nurturing. All children are welcome and encouraged to participate in all types of play and learning.

Our anti-bias curriculum is supported by a variety of multi-cultural and bias-free books, dolls and other learning materials as well as specific teacher-directed activities and experiences that are a regular part of the classroom. We strongly encourage your support, involvement and feedback regarding these efforts. In addition, families are invited to contribute to the curriculum by sharing ideas or materials with the teacher or while working in the classroom. We hope you will consider sharing your special skills and knowledge with the children!

## Holiday & Birthday Celebrations

Holiday celebrations have long been a challenge for early childhood educators. In our efforts to implement an Anti-Bias Curriculum, we strive to honor and respect the cultures and traditions of all who participate in our program. Our school has several holiday celebrations on our calendar, and we wish to work together to determine the most appropriate way to enjoy these celebrations as a school community. It is our hope that we can create opportunities to come together in ways that are appropriate and enriching for the children and adults who are a part of our community.

We appreciate and value every child, and like to celebrate what is special and unique about them every day, as well as on their birthday. If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please **do not bring sugary treats** (i.e. cupcakes). We will provide a birthday crown, a birthday candle, and sing, "Happy Birthday" at snack (or lunch) time. We welcome you to bring birthday napkins and healthy snacks (if shared snacks are part of our current programming), which can be made at school as a class cooking project, if you wish. "Special" snacks such as fruit kabobs, granola bars, or finger foods with "fancy" toothpicks are also popular. The energy level exhibited around sugary foods can be extremely high in groups of 15 or 18 children! Your child is at school in the morning for just 2 ½ or 3 hours. Please save sugary treats for your child's family and friend celebrations. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Additionally, please DO NOT DISTRIBUTE birthday party invitations at school. Young children are very sensitive to being excluded from anything, especially birthday parties. Children, and even parents, can experience hurt feelings when they do not receive an invitation. Please feel free to contact other families at home by phone, email or snail mail to extend party invitations. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

# Guidance Practices & Policies

Part of the role of any preschool program is to help young children develop appropriate school and social behaviors. It is important for children to learn to cooperate with teachers and peers, to learn to solve conflicts with others through negotiation and problem-solving instead of aggressive acts, and to learn to respect and care for others. Our primary objective in guiding children at school is to provide them with opportunities to increase their autonomy and connect with others in a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment. We feel it is best to guide young children's behavior by clearly stating our expectations and giving them reasons for our expectations and rules. We have many techniques to engage a child's cooperation such as giving the child a choice about her/his activity whenever possible. Our goals are for each child to assume responsibility for her/his behavior, and to facilitate the acquisition of appropriate self-management & self-control skills.

When a child's behavior is inappropriate or unacceptable at school, there are a number of techniques which can be used to provide guidance. Whenever possible, adults should allow children to experience the natural or logical consequences of inappropriate behavior. For example, if a child repeatedly misuses a classroom material, he/she might be restricted from using that material for a period of time. Redirection to another activity, or time spent one-on-one with an adult might also be used as a solution to a behavior problem.

We encourage children to become aware of how their actions affect others by helping them to identify and attend to the feelings and reactions of the other children in the environment. We encourage children to resolve their own conflicts with peers by "using their words" to state their needs and feelings to each other. An important part of learning to control one's behavior is learning to identify and label one's feelings. Adults help children learn to identify and verbalize their emotions.

Under no circumstances may corporal punishment be used as a means of controlling behavior. Parents are encouraged to seek assistance from the teacher in developing positive discipline practices for school and home. When parents and the teacher use similar methods for guiding behavior, we can all be more effective and successful.

Each child in our program has the right to feel safe, secure and comfortable at school. Every child has the right to be heard—both introverts and extroverts. Please help children who are shy or less comfortable sharing their feelings express their needs and desires. We reserve the right to request assistance from parents in situations in which we feel the child may endanger him/herself or others. In situations in which a child "loses control" and cannot regain his/her composure, a child may be sent home for the remainder of the school day. In order to send a strong, clear message, children are automatically sent home when they bite another person.

## The Basic Rules

The basic ground rules for conduct in our classroom include respect and care for self, others, and classroom materials. This is to say explicitly that children may not hurt themselves, others, or materials belonging to the classroom community.

### Other guidelines include the following:

- Use an “inside” speaking voice
- Walk inside the classroom
- Follow basic rules concerning physical safety (i.e. walk with scissors)
- Take turns to speak in group gatherings
- Everyone should help during clean-up time
- Children may leave the classroom only with an adult, including using the restroom
- Touch table contents must remain inside the table
- Strive to facilitate play, rather than control it

\*Please uphold any other rules that are created collaboratively with the children as issues arise

### Additional Guidelines for Outdoor Play:

- Children must remain in the sight of an adult at all times. Be aware of children’s whereabouts  
Watch for children hiding in bushes
- We have use of the playground, the grassy area, and on rare occasion, the church parking lot for bike riding. Adults must place themselves strategically to ensure safety in each area.
- Sand must remain in the sandbox
- Children may not climb on the fence
- To facilitate safety, traffic on the slides must be one-way
- All children must wear helmets when riding bikes or scooters. The school has enough helmets to provide each child with a helmet. Helmets should be adjusted to fit.

### Big Room Guidelines:

- Children may not jump off of the wooden play structure
- One child at a time on the slide, and the slide is for down only
- Running traffic must be flow in one direction to avoid collisions
- Redirect rough/aggressive games and play
- Accompany children when they need to use the bathroom

### Superhero/Weapon Play:

Superhero play is a part of modern childhood for many children. If and when children wish to engage in such play, the appropriate locations for this type of dramatic, active play are either the Big Room or outside. Not all children are comfortable with this type of play, and the teacher does not feel it is appropriate for a classroom environment. Redirecting this type of play to a location outside of the classroom helps all children learn to respect the comfort levels of all children in their class, and also to gain an understanding that there are appropriate times, situations, and locations for different types of play. Mt. Tabor Preschool is first and foremost a school, and some types of play and behavior which are appropriate and acceptable elsewhere are just not okay for a school environment. Respect for each other is the key in making such decisions.

School should be a safe and secure place for all children at all times. **Weapons of any kind – “REAL” OR IMAGINARY– do not belong in school at any time.** It is understood that rules at school and rules at home may differ, and young children are capable of understanding this. Please promote the preschool's anti-weapon play philosophy while at school by reminding children of everyone's right to feel safe, and confiscate and store any inappropriate items which may be brought from home or created by children.

Much thought and consideration has gone into developing these policies. If you or your child feel unable to be supportive of or unable to abide by these policies of behavior and respect, you are welcome to discuss your feelings and opinions with the teacher. However, it is possible that in such a case, Mt. Tabor Preschool may not be the best match for you and/or your child.

## Resolving Conflicts With Children

Wherever there are children with ideas, there are bound to be conflicts. When these conflicts arise in the classroom, our role as teachers/parents is to calmly and fairly facilitate a solution. The first step in doing so is to observe and assess the situation. Our initial concerns are, "Where is this going?" and, "Is anyone in real danger?" If there is little likelihood that someone is going to become physically injured, try to move in a little closer and get down on the children's level, to make yourself available to them and let them know that an adult is aware of what is going on. If tensions seem to be escalating, move in even closer, positioning yourself between or among the involved children. Consider making a statement such as, "It looks like you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_." Ask the children if they want your help in resolving their conflict. If so, ask each child to explain their perception of the situation and how they are feeling about it.

After each child has had a turn to speak, pose a question about how they might reach a resolution to their problem. If their suggestions seemed unreasonable or inappropriate, i.e., "I want to throw her in the garbage," suggest potential solutions. Help the children to negotiate a reasonable solution to meet the needs of all involved by asking them questions, then relating to them your understanding of what they have said. Remain objective and do not take sides. Use non-judgmental, non-persuasive language, allowing them to work out the solution by themselves as much as possible.

Next, put into words the agreed upon solution so that all involved children are clear about what is going to happen next. If necessary, provide the monitoring and follow-through to bring their solution to fruition, i.e. setting a timer, letting a child know when their turn is up, etc.

We have found that by acting as mediators, conflicts between most children occur less often over the course of time. Ideally, as children learn the skills needed to solve problems on their own, they feel secure in knowing that they can negotiate with others and find solutions to problems without the help of adults. In time, the classroom community becomes a more peaceful and joyful place where feelings are acknowledged, opinions are respected, and occasional conflicts provide opportunities to become more open minded and flexible.

## Guides to Speech and Action

The following is a child guidance course in a “nutshell”. Please follow these guidelines when acting as a Teacher Helper in the classroom.

1. *Positive directions*: Tell the child what he/she *can* do. Avoid “would you like to?,” “Okay?,” or “don’t!” This helps us see children positively and gives them a model for their own social interactions.
2. *Give appropriate choices*: Give choices suitable to age and maturity. Give choice only when you can accept the response. Be clear on your goals and expectations for the child.
3. *Voice tone as teaching tool*: Quiet, firm, slow, clear. Move closer rather than talk louder. Be emotionally honest in tone. This is a model for children’s voices.
4. *Support self-respect and confidence*: Avoid labels and ridicule. Verbalize the child’s feelings. Give constructive encouragement and feedback.
5. *Self-set standards*: Avoid comparison and competition. Emphasize process, not product. Use self-correcting materials and activities.
6. *Redirect behavior*: Provide an alternative that is acceptable and still meets the child’s needs.
7. *Effective timing*: Make suggestions when they will do the most good, give the child a chance to rely on her/his own resources, prevent trouble, connect words with the child’s actions.
8. *Avoid making models*: Explore and enjoy materials without making objects. Use materials as a child might; not on an adult level.
9. *Give minimal help*: Avoid unsolicited help. Respond when asked. Help the child to help him/herself. Break the task down into manageable steps.
10. *Reinforce directions*: Suggest a follow through. Make your body match your words. Make use of peer influence. Minimize words.
11. *Foresee and forestall*: Prevent serious problems. Structure a safe, cooperative environment. Provide ways to resolve conflict. Think about the impact of your own behavior.
12. *Set clear limits*: Keep them few and consistent. Make sure they are understood. Follow through. Watch for three red flags: (“A child may not hurt *self, others, or materials/equipment.*”)
13. *Strategic body placement*: Alert to total situation. At children’s level. Move as needed. Avoid grouping with adults.
14. *Health and safety first*: Be constantly watchful. Evaluate the environment on-goingly. Avoid helping children beyond their own skill level. Follow procedures to handle illness and injury.
15. *Observe, observe, observe*: Teaching is based on the ability to see and interpret behavior accurately. Take *specific* notes when making observations. Know age-level expectations. Be aware of individual differences.

## Encouragement vs. Praise

### **The Problems With Praise And Why It Can Backfire**

by Tammy Cox, LMSW

"Give children lots of praise." This sounds like good parenting advice, but there is a difference between appropriate praise (encouragement) and inappropriate praise.

Praise tends to stimulate rivalry and competition, because it focuses on quality of performance and the child usually feels judged in comparison to others. It can also foster selfishness and create a "better than others" attitude and a child might become a quitter if she can't be the best. Praise fosters dependence and teaches children to become pleasers because it is external motivation.

Encouragement tends to stimulate cooperation and contribution because it focuses on the process (effort, determination, persistence and joy) rather than the end product. The child feels accepted because her value is not dependent on the quality of her performance. Encouragement also fosters self-interest which doesn't hurt others, self-sufficiency and interdependence because it is internal motivation.

Common praising statements such as "You are such a good girl/boy.," "You're the best.....," or "I'm proud of you.," tend to create children who always look to others for approval. Encouraging alternatives might be "I love being with you.," "You're a great kid.," "It looks like you really enjoy that.," "Thanks for your help.," or "You must really feel good about what you've done."

While it is important to watch our language, the real key to distinguishing the difference between praise and encouragement is to check our intent. If we are trying to manipulate the child so that he will keep pleasing us, it is praise. If our intent is to acknowledge him for who he is or what he's done, or just let him know how much we appreciate and value him, it will be encouragement. While the two may sound very similar, children can tell the difference and they will pick up on our true intentions.

A recommended book on how to be a more encouraging parent is [The Magic Of Encouragement](#) by Stephanie Marston.

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## Person First Language

As teacher helpers in the classroom, we invite you to support our Anti-Bias Curriculum by modeling respectful language when talking about persons with disabilities. Language is a reflection of how people see each other. It is for this very reason that the words we use can hurt. It is also why responsible communicators are now choosing language that reflects the dignity of people with disabilities. Read on for a short course on using language that empowers.

- ★ Think "people first." Say, "a girl who has Down syndrome" rather than a "Down syndrome girl." It is important to remember that the person with the disability has the final say in how they want their disability referenced. For example, some people who have autism prefer to be referred to as autistic. Start with person-first language but defer to the preference of the person you are communicating with.
- ★ Avoid words like "unfortunate," "afflicted," and "victim." Try to avoid casting a person with a disability as a superhuman model of courage. People with disabilities are just people, not tragic figures or demigods.
- ★ Use common sense. Avoid terms with obvious negative or judgmental connotations, such as "crippled," "deaf and dumb," "lame," and "defective." If you are not sure how to refer to a person's condition, ask. And, if the disability is not relevant to your story or conversation, why mention it at all?
- ★ Never refer to a person as "confined to a wheelchair." Wheelchairs enable people to escape confinement. A person with mobility impairment "uses" a wheelchair. Try to describe people without disabilities as "typical" rather than "normal."

### EXAMPLES TO USE AND TO SHARE

The handicapped or the disabled	People <b>with</b> disabilities
My child is autistic	My child <b>has</b> autism
She's in Special Education	She <b>receives</b> Special Education services
Afflicted with, suffers from, a victim of...	Person who <b>has...</b>
Handicapped parking	<b>Accessible</b> parking
Confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair bound	<b>Uses</b> a wheelchair or <b>is in</b> a wheelchair

# Member Family Responsibilities

A cooperative school is dependent upon its members coming together to help run the school. As outlined in your enrollment information, each Member Family is responsible for the following:

1. General Membership Meetings
2. Community Hours
3. Tuition Payments
4. Fundraising
5. TeacherHelping
6. Preschool Jobs

Below you'll find additional information regarding your responsibilities:

## General Membership and Other Meetings

General Membership Meetings are held monthly. A family representative is required to attend. It is helpful if the person who most consistently helps in the classroom attends so that information regarding classroom issues can be addressed and discussions can take place. The President or the Secretary must be notified in advance if a parent cannot attend a General Meeting in order to be excused and make sure any materials distributed or information shared can be passed along. MTP reserves the right to charge families a \$25 dollar fee for failing to attend the mandatory general meeting without an excused absence. If charged this fee will be used to support the MTP tuition assistance program.

Board Meetings are held monthly. Non-board members are always welcome to attend.

PCPO Meetings are held monthly. The time and place is designated in the PCPO Bulletin. The PCPO Representative and President for our school attend each meeting, but anyone is welcome to attend. These meetings are very informative.

## Community Hours

Community hours provide another opportunity for parental involvement and help ensure that work is equally distributed amongst all Mt. Tabor Preschool families. Each family is required to provide a total of 3 community hours per school year. Opportunities for community hours will be communicated throughout the school year and can also be found on post-it notes near the community hour board in the classroom. Work done during a teacher helper shift or for a family's Preschool Job will not be counted towards community hours.

## Tuition Payments

For the school to function efficiently, it is important that you meet your financial obligations. Tuition is due by the first of the month and past due by the tenth.

Payments may be submitted via Electronic Bank Transfer, Credit Card via monthly emailed invoices, or by check. Checks can be deposited in the Tuition File Folder located in the classroom. Please make checks payable to Mt. Tabor Preschool. Upon payment, a receipt will be issued.

Paying tuition on time is helpful for our volunteer Treasury team to keep up with their tremendous workload. If tuition is not paid by the 15th of the month, a \$25 late fee will be added to that family's invoice. Tuition left unpaid by the 15th of the following month will result in that family being unenrolled until tuition is paid in full.

If, for any reason, you are unable to pay tuition, please contact the Treasurer before funds are due to create a plan.

## Tuition Assistance Program

We would like to welcome families into our school regardless of their ability to pay. The enrollment fees our families contribute at the beginning of each school year allow us to have a modest tuition assistance program. This allows some families the opportunity to pay a reduced-rate tuition, based upon the family's need and availability of funds.

Each school year the preschool has the ability to offer up to 3 tuition assistance grants reducing the cost of enrollment by up to 50%. Additional scholarships may be available when a request for tuition assistance is for less than 50% of the cost of enrollment for that class.

Emergency tuition assistance requests can be submitted at any time throughout the year and will be reviewed immediately by the Executive Board (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary).

Submitting an application for ongoing or emergency tuition assistance does not guarantee assistance will be awarded.

For more information and to apply, please contact the Treasurer or President.

## Fundraising

Fundraising allows our school to keep tuition low and can be easier and more fun than many families realize. While it benefits our organization to have families engage their communities by involving them in our fundraisers, families may also choose to buy out of their obligation, or conduct their own fundraising to meet the amount requested (see Additional Opportunities). If a family elects to buy-out their fundraising obligation instead of engaging in other fundraising activities they will be responsible for an additional 20% in value (for example, if the obligation for the year is \$100 dollar a family choosing to “buy-out” their obligation will be responsible for a \$120 dollar donation). The additional percentage will not be charged to families who actively participate in fundraising activities but are unable to meet the dollar value obligation.

Details may change from year to year, but in general, you can expect the following fundraising opportunities:

**Spring Auction** - Families will be asked to procure items for the auction, as well as engage in outreach to bring bidders to the event.

**Rewards Programs** - Mt. Tabor Preschool is a registered 501c3 and has rewards programs through Fred Meyer and Amazon Smile (use search term *Mount Tabor Preschool*). You may also donate your BottleDrop deposits using a designated bag and sticker available at MTP. Consider registering your accounts with the preschool to earn money for the school while you shop. Money raised does not count toward individual fundraising goals, but still helps the greater community.

**Additional Opportunities** - Families are encouraged to create events outside what the fundraising team organizes. This may include partnering with a restaurant to earn a percentage of sales on a designated night, hosting a “buy-in”, or something else entirely. Buy-ins must be approved by the school’s board in advance. In the past they have included events like workshops, babysitting nights, clothing swap parties, etc. If you have any questions, be sure to contact the school’s Fundraising Chair for help.

## Preschool Jobs

Preschool Jobs are another opportunity to be involved in your child’s education and help improve the school. Job assignments are coordinated by the school’s Vice President and job descriptions are available on the school’s website.

Parents fulfilling their job requirements are integral to running the school well. If you feel you are unable to meet the requirements of your job, contact the school’s Vice President to help find a solution or arrange for a different job.

## Teacher Helping in the Classroom

One of the best ways to help you to feel comfortable "at work" in the classroom is to be clear about expectations in your role as Teacher Helper.

### Teacher Helper Schedule

Please arrive at 9:00 am, 30 minutes before class begins, and please be on time. Plan to stay for *at least* 30 minutes after class ends or until all the clean-up tasks are completed. You are welcome to bring a snack/lunch for your child to eat while you're working. **It is your responsibility to contact the "alternate" parent teacher if you require a substitute due to illness or emergency.** Contact the Class Representative and the teacher to notify them that a substitute will be taking your place. Be prepared to work that family's next scheduled shift, or another day arranged with the person who worked for you and note the change on teacher helper calendar.

### Responsibilities

When you arrive at school:

- Wash or sanitize your (& your child's) hands before entering the classroom
- Help your child settle in. Invite them to help you if they wish to do so
- Store the class snack that you've brought in the appropriate place
- Check in with the teacher and find out about the day's activities
- Help with preparation for the day's activities as directed by the teacher
- Fill the touch table (as needed)
- Prepare bathroom for use. Place small white step stools in front of each toilet, blue step stools in front of each sink, and bottled soap dispensers at each sink
- Prepare the easels
- Set up outdoor/indoor equipment
- Remove children's artwork from the drying rack from the prior day and place in the appropriate folder
- Greet children and parents as they arrive. Help children say goodbye
- Lock the outside door and classroom door at 9:45 am

During the morning:

- Move about the classroom. Help children make choices about activities. Assist with transitions. Try to stay aware of "the big picture"
- Ask children questions about their play. Provide extensions when appropriate
- Engage in children's play by invitation only. Feel free to decline if you have other responsibilities or prefer not to play
- Invite children to sign their artwork or label it if they indicate to do so. Please date discreetly and place on a drying rack

- Keep areas "fresh" by refilling materials, helping children clean-up before moving to another area, generally putting things where they belong
- Alert the teacher of any situation you are uncomfortable handling
- Read stories or facilitate games or activities with small groups of children
- Write down children's words--dictate stories, write letters, or document quotes
- Take pictures of children at play
- Relax and enjoy yourself! Enjoy this special opportunity to "work" with your child
- Facilitate toileting and hand washing. Please make sure that children use soap and rinse thoroughly when washing hands
- Wash/sanitize your own hands often, especially before snack set-up!
- Junior Parents: Set up snack during Group Time (if shared snacks are being offered)
- Senior Parents: Have snack ready before school begins (if shared snacks are being offered)
- Encourage children to clean up their own snack areas
- Help children with coats, hats, shoes/boots as necessary for outside play
- Leave the outside door unlocked for parents when we come in from outside play time

At the end of the school day:

- One Parent Helper "stands guard" at the exterior door to ensure that kids leave the building only with their designated adult.
- Help children share with parents about what they did during the morning
- Your child is welcome to help you with your "grown-up" jobs, or may eat lunch (Juniors), draw, look at books, or play in the loft
- Straighten all classroom areas (blocks, manips, dramatic play, etc.)
- Put away books and music
- Empty the touch table as needed (check with the teacher)
- Stack the step stools in the bathroom and store under the sinks
- Store hand soap on the windowsill just inside the classroom
- Hang towels to dry (or put in laundry)
- Load snack dishes in the dishwasher and run it if it's full
- Clean paint cups, lids and brushes. Dry and put away on the art counter
- Wipe down tables, chairs, easels, and paint smocks
- Stack chairs, sweep floors, spot mop as necessary.
- Vacuum carpeted areas, including the hallway outside the classroom
- Put away all outdoor/indoor equipment
- Empty compost outside
- Empty garbage cans when full and reline
- Take recyclables (packaging from snack) outside
- Help your child clean up her/his lunch, projects, etc

Please remember to sign out your child!

## Nutrition/Snacks

We strive to provide fresh, healthful foods for children. We encourage children to try new healthy items alongside their peers when food can be prepared and shared safely. During Teacher Helper Orientation we will discuss whether shared snacks are part of our current curriculum.

Each day the parent teachers supply snacks—one brings a carbohydrate/protein and the other brings a fruit/veggie. Water is served with all snacks. Please do not bring juice.

Please be aware of food allergies and dietary restrictions. There are typically 15 children in the Junior Class, and 18 children in the Senior Class.

Listed below are some suggestions for snacks for preschoolers:

Mini muffins	Fresh fruit
Soft pretzels	Fresh vegetables & dip
Hard Pretzels	Dried fruit
Pirate Booty	Raisins/craisins
Toast	Applesauce
English muffins	Yogurt
Goldfish crackers	Cottage cheese
Graham crackers	Canned fruit (in juice—not syrup)
Breadsticks	Ants-on-a-log
Cheese & crackers	Smoothies
Cheese cubes or slices	English muffin pizzas
Popcorn	Trail mix*
Mini bagels w/ cream cheese	Granola bars*
Dry cereal	Pita & hummus*

▪ Please note that all snacks must be store bought (not homemade) or made at the school. Please bring packages to school unopened.

▪ Please avoid/limit foods that are high in sugar.

Seniors eat snack as one of the “choices” during free-choice time.

Juniors eat snack together as a group after circle time.

▪ When possible, organic and local foods are preferable.

*\* Please be aware of nut/seed allergies, which are posted in the classroom.*

# Senior Class Lunches

The senior class school day is extended to provide children with the opportunity to eat lunch at school, and learn to do so independently in preparation for their transition to kindergarten. You can help your child be successful at lunchtime by adhering to the following Do's and Don'ts:

## **DO:**

*Do* provide your child a balanced meal which includes protein, carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, and a beverage. Talk with your child about what they should eat first, last, etc.

*Do* pack your child's lunch in reusable containers they can open (or work on opening) independently.

*Do* make lunchtime quicker and easier for your child by prepping foods at home. Please peel oranges and hard boiled eggs, cut tough foods into bite sized pieces, unwrap cheese sticks, etc.

*Do* provide your child with eating utensils and a napkin (preferably cloth).

*Do* keep your child's lunch fresh by either providing food in an insulated lunchbox with an ice pack, placing hot foods in a thermos, or by putting your child's lunch in the school's refrigerator at drop-off time in the morning. (Please tell your child where they can find their lunch.)

*Do* be aware of children with severe food allergies and pack your child's lunch accordingly.

*Do* bring a lunch for yourself when helping in the Senior Class. Please sit down to eat with the children and facilitate appropriate mealtime conversation. (You are welcome to bring foods for yourself that require reheating.)

## **DON'T:**

*Don't* put candy in your child's lunch. It isn't healthy, it creates distraction from eating nutritious foods, and it poses potential power struggles between children and adults (not to mention the potential for taunting other children). Please just don't do it. Save sweets for after school treats.

*Don't* send your child to school with foods that require preparation or reheating. This means no Cup of Noodles, frozen entrees, etc.

*Don't* allow children to share food. Each child's lunch is packed specifically with their food allergies and dietary restrictions in mind.

# Eco-Healthy Child Care

Mt. Tabor Preschool is a certified Eco-Healthy Child Care Program! This means that we are committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for your child. We adhere to the guidelines provided by this organization which cover such concerns as safe art supplies, chemicals and safe cleaning supplies, air quality, pesticides and pest prevention, exposure to lead, mercury, and radon, recycling and garbage management, among other eco-healthy things.

One step we ask all of our families to take is to reduce the amount of waste we produce. You can help by purchasing snacks for your child's classroom in bulk packaging. Please avoid individual, single use packaging especially of products such as yogurt, applesauce, cheese sticks, etc. Instead purchase large containers. Our school has plenty of durable dishes and utensils, and a dishwasher right in our classroom.

Please compost leftover foods (our guinea pigs are often more than happy to help with leftover fruits and veggies!) and recycle packaging from snacks you bring when parent helping.

Please also pack Senior kid's lunches as "waste free" as possible. There are many products and lunch kits available these days to make this super easy. Bento style lunch boxes have multiple compartments and often include utensils. Check out these options:

**Rubbermaid LunchBlox** at [www.rubbermaid.com](http://www.rubbermaid.com) (sold at big box stores - Target & Fred Meyer)

**Bentology** at [www.bentology.com](http://www.bentology.com) (available online and at Mirador & New Seasons)

**LunchBots** at [www.lunchbots.com](http://www.lunchbots.com) (available online & at New Seasons)

**PlanetBox** at [www.planetbox.com](http://www.planetbox.com) (available online)

**YumBox** at [yumboxlunch.com](http://yumboxlunch.com) (available online)

**Go Green Lunch Box** at [www.gogreenlunchbox.com](http://www.gogreenlunchbox.com) (available online)

These reusable containers are easy to open, are made from food safe and dishwasher washable plastics or stainless steel, and can be reused again and again for years to come!

Our school has both a Health & Safety Coordinator and a Sustainability Coordinator to help keep us on track with our sustainability goals and provide parent education.

You can learn more about Eco-Healthy Child Care at [www.ecohealthychildcare.org](http://www.ecohealthychildcare.org).

# Information & School Policies

## Communication

It is essential in an organization such as our school that there be open, honest, and respectful communication between parents and teachers. The teacher loves to share about what we do and why, so please feel free to ask questions about what you see happening in the classroom. If you have strong concerns about anything you or your child experience, please request to speak to the teacher at an appropriate time, in private. You are welcome to request a third party/mediator be present at the time of the meeting. Please respect that the classroom is a “sacred” place where children do their work. Adult issues should always be discussed away from children when involved persons are able to be attentive.

Parent-Teacher conferences will be available in the fall and spring. However, please feel free to request a conference at any time if you have questions or concerns. The teacher will do her best to accommodate your request in a timely manner.

It is important to our teacher that she be available to you and your family, for whatever reason. If you should need to contact your child’s teacher outside of school time, you may do so by phone or by email. (See class roster.)

### **If you have a problem or suggestion...**

...related to the classroom, your child, or another child, you should speak to Amy.

...related to the operation of the school, you should speak to the President, Vice President or another board member.

...related to your co-op job and its responsibilities, you should speak to the Vice President/Job Coordinator.

...with another parent, you should attempt to address it directly with that individual. If you are not comfortable doing so, you may have a confidential conversation with your class representative or the board president.

...but wish to remain anonymous, there is a suggestion box located near the sign-in table.

Teacher Amy and the members of the board are always willing to hear any feedback or concerns, with the expectation that conversations will be confidential and respectful. Whenever possible, conversations should be in-person (or by phone) rather than via email or text. Please keep in mind that while we appreciate all constructive feedback, our school is primarily run by volunteers and it may not be possible to satisfactorily or immediately address all concerns or implement all suggestions.

All families are asked to sign a separate communication code of conduct to agree to some basic rules of engagement when it comes to communication.

Thank you for helping make our school such a special place for our children!

### **Some Notes About Communication With Teacher Amy:**

Time is a precious commodity! There are more than sixty parents at our school, and just one teacher. This can mean that communicating with all of you can take a lot of time outside of school. Whenever possible, please communicate with Teacher Amy during her work hours. Amy is at school from 8:30 to 1:30 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and 8:30 to 1:00 on Tuesday and Thursday. If you need to reach her outside of these hours, before 8:00pm on weekdays is preferable.

If you need to share a bit of logistical information (ie: your child is ill and will be absent, someone else will pick up your child, you will be late, etc.) a brief text message is ideal. (You may also leave notes on the sign-in sheet.) She may or may not be able to respond—most likely not during class time.

If your child was upset or had a difficult time at drop off, a brief text to check on your child is perfectly fine. Please do not anticipate a lengthy or detailed response. Also, once you have left the classroom, please avoid coming back in!

If you wish to discuss issues concerning your child, other children, or matters of a more personal or emotional nature, please arrange to have a phone conversation or face to face parent-teacher conference with Teacher Amy. Before school is a busy time, but after school offers more flexibility.

Please be aware that if you choose to enroll your preschooler in after-school “extra curricular” activities such as Soccer, Art, Yoga, Dance, or other classes, you will be limiting your face-to-face contact with your child's teacher. Please be prepared to take initiative to check in with the teacher on a regular basis whenever you should feel the need. Days when you help in the classroom are a great opportunity to touch base after school while we clean up from the day's activities.

Please also be aware that working side by side with young children can be incredibly rewarding, but also emotionally taxing work. Many families return to MTP with each of their children, and over the years grow to know Teacher Amy quite well. Familiarity with the teacher is in no way a sign of favoritism, it is merely a by-product of “serving time in the trenches” of the classroom together! Teacher Amy will always respect your level of personal comfort in sharing about our lives outside of the classroom, and will always keep information you share with her in confidence.

Social media has become an integral means of communicating and staying up to date. Our school has a “Members Only” Facebook group that we encourage you to participate in. It's a

great place to share photos, videos, anecdotes from the classroom, and extend invitations to member families to enjoy activities together outside of school. You are welcome to extend “Friend” invitations to any member (including Teacher Amy), but please be mindful of others' privacy in keeping with our confidentiality policy. Please do not post photos of preschool children on social media without parents' consent.

Please be respectful of Amy's personal/family time, and avoid evening and weekend communication unless an urgent need arises. Your child's teacher wants to be available to you but maintaining appropriate boundaries is important for all our sakes.

### Attendance

In consideration of the class and the teacher, please bring your child into the classroom at 9:30 am. If you arrive earlier than 9:30 and the classroom doors are closed, please wait in the hallway or play outside until the doors open.

Please be on time to pick up children at 12:00 (Juniors) or 12:30 (Seniors) each day. Parent helpers are to be in the classroom by 9:00 am each day!

Seniors attend school on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Juniors attend school on Tuesday and Thursday. Only non-mobile babies (generally under 6 months) should be brought when teacherhelping for safety. (Please see Childcare and Younger Sibling Policy.)

### Signing In & Out

A child's parent or adult authorized by the parent must bring the child into the classroom is required to sign the child in **daily** upon arrival. The school does not become responsible for children until they have been signed in and greeted by an adult. After signing your child in, please make contact with the teacher or a parent helper to indicate to her that you are leaving so that they may be available to help your child separate if necessary. When it is time to leave your child, always say good-bye and leave decisively. Children who cry when their parents leave almost always settle down quickly and begin enjoying their day. Parents are encouraged to text or call their child's teacher to hear how the child is doing if they are concerned.

Parents must sign their child out of school each day as well. Please make sure the teacher is aware that you are taking your child from school. Often parents visit with one another or talk with the teacher as they pick-up their children. You are responsible for your preschool child once you enter the classroom. Please keep your child with you during this time.

### Changes in Pick-up Person

Please let the teacher know in advance if another adult will be picking up your child at the end of the school day. You should make a note in the “Notes to the Teacher” section on the sign-in sheet. We will remind your child of the change to help ease their transition at the end of the school day.

### Documentation

Documenting children's work is one of the most valuable and useful ways to see a child's development over time. Through the course of the year, I will collect work samples, the Senior children will keep journals (which are to stay at school until the end of the year) and I will document their work with photographs, quotes, and observations. Please feel free to snap a picture and jot a note (quotations are invaluable!) when you see children's ideas and plans coming to fruition. We never know when down the road a child may say, "I can't". Imagine their joy when we can show them, "You already did!" or that now they can do it even better!

### Field Trips

Field trips are a regular part of our curriculum. Some field trips may be a walk in the neighborhood to collect natural materials or make observations, while others will require considerable planning and preparation. Parents will always be informed well in advance of any "beyond the neighborhood" outings with additional parent help required to ensure safety and enjoyment for the children. Car pools will be organized and proof of insurance is required for drivers. Public transportation may sometimes be used for local outings.

### Clothing

Activities at school can be messy! Although we do provide paint smocks, roll up sleeves, etc., we cannot keep children from getting messy at school. Please send your child to school in weather appropriate play clothes that allow them to participate fully, and understand that clothes might get stained or wet while at school. Please bring a complete change of clothing (including underwear and socks) to keep in your child's cubby. Please bring your child to school with a jacket or coat every day, preferably with a hood. Layering is best so that children can shed/add layers as temperatures fluctuate. We strongly encourage you to invest in a pair of rain boots & a raincoat for our Portland weather.

Classroom floors and playground equipment can be slippery. Children should wear sturdy, comfortable shoes to school. Cowboy boots, flip-flops, and "dress-up" shoes with slick soles are not safe or appropriate for active play.

### Toys From Home

We have a wide variety of materials and equipment for children to use at school. We have found that toys from home are often difficult for children to share or may get lost or broken at school. Your child is welcome to bring the following to share with his/her class: books, games, music or story cds, and objects from nature to examine. On a family's Teacher Helper day, a child and adult may bring something (a game, activity, etc.) to share during Free Choice Time. Please check with the teacher first so that she may add the activity to her lesson plan. If a comfort item is needed to help your child feel secure at school, we encourage you to direct your child to keep

it in his/her cubby while at play to avoid losing it. Toy weapons of any kind are *not* allowed at school at any time—during school or before or after on school grounds.

### Candy & Gum

Candy and gum are not permitted at school. Do not include candy in your child's lunch.

### Health Policies

Immunization forms are issued for each child. These must be returned to the Health & Safety Coordinator. All students must be up to date on all required vaccinations, or have an approved exemption (medical (permanent or temporary) or non-medical).

MTP's Covid-19 protocols and policies require that all classroom visitors (including students, staff, volunteers, and visitors) who are eligible be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 (but for a verified medical exception). An individual is considered fully vaccinated following the designated waiting period after having received all CDC recommended COVID-19 doses based on their risk factors and age.

If your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions, it is your responsibility to inform the teacher. A list of foods your child is restricted from eating should be posted so that parent teachers can be aware when serving the snack. If your child's allergy is SEVERE, please be prepared to speak about your child's allergy at the September General Meeting. If your child may require the use of an EpiPen, please keep one at school in the First Aid Drawer and be prepared to instruct other parents on its use.

No child who is ill, who shows any symptoms of a communicable disease, or who is overtired should be sent to school. Symptoms or conditions which may exclude your child from school or for which he/she will be sent home include, but are not limited to the following:

- Diarrhea or vomiting (none within 24 hrs prior to returning to school)
- Fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Yellow color to the skin or eyes
- Rash
- Excessive coughing or runny nose
- Skin infections
- Sore throat, earache, swollen glands
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Head lice
- Any communicable diseases including (but not limited to) Covid-19, chicken pox, strep throat, measles, Fifth Disease, and scabies.
- Unusual behavior
  - Child is cranky, listless, or less active than usual
  - Child cries more than usual
  - Child experiences change in eating or drinking habits

Please notify the school ASAP if your child has contracted a communicable disease.

Usually children with the above symptoms may return to school when all of the symptoms/conditions have disappeared. A written statement from a physician may be required in some cases. There will be less illness at school if ill children are kept home. The above guidelines are designed to protect both well and ill children, as well as teachers and parents. The above guidelines are based on the Oregon State Health Division's Health Assessment Tool for the Preschool Child.

If your child is ill and will not be coming to school, please text or call by 9:30 to notify the teacher.

In the event of an emergency, the child will be given appropriate first aid, and if necessary, be transported to a hospital for care. The parent will be notified and located as soon as possible, but if unavailable, one of the emergency contacts will be called to help locate the parent and/or help with the situation. Because of the time required to locate a parent and the nature of some emergency situations, it is of the utmost importance that current contact information be available to the teacher at all times. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure the emergency contact information on file for your child is up-to-date and accurate.

### Toileting

Our preschool recognizes and honors that children develop at different rates, reaching milestones when they are ready. This includes potty training! If your child is still working toward this milestone, rest assured that we will support your child while at school. Please follow these guidelines to enable us to work together:

- If your child is not yet comfortable in underwear, please bring him/her in "pull-ups". This will enable use of the toilet with greater ease while at school. (No diapers, please.) Please place extras in your child's cubby as needed.
- If your child has a bowel movement during class time, we will call you to come to school to change her/him. Many preschools require that children be fully toilet trained before entering because of liability to the changer. We have that liability as well, and have developed this policy to allow children who are not fully potty trained to attend our school.
- Adults will provide children with frequent reminders to try using the toilet. Peer influence can also lend to regular, successful use of the toilet.

### Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is the single best way of preventing disease/illness. Please join us in helping your child to develop the habit of washing their hands often. Children should learn to use warm water and soap, and to vigorously rub their hands together when washing. Please help your child wash their hands upon arrival at school in the morning, prior to entering the classroom. Hands should be washed before eating, after toileting or wiping noses, and throughout the day!

### Medication Policy

If your child requires medication while at school, the medicine must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, doctor, medicine name and dosage, and a current date. Written instructions must be provided in order for the medication to be given by the teacher (or TA in her absence). Medicine must be stored in the First Aid Drawer or in the refrigerator on the top shelf. The teacher will administer non-prescription medicines (Tylenol, cough medicine, etc.) only when the parent brings a doctor's note. All non-prescription medicines must be in their original containers and be clearly labeled with the child's name.

### Inclement Weather Policy

Mt. Tabor Preschool will follow the Portland Public School schedule for closure due to inclement weather. If PPS has a delayed opening, we will be closed. On days when the weather is snowy or icy, please check online or listen to local radio or news for closure info. MTP does not "make up" snow days.

### Disaster Plan/Safety Procedures

In the event of an emergency, parents will be notified as quickly as possible. Please assist us by making sure the emergency contact information on file is kept current.

- Any immediate action will be left to the discretion of the teacher.
- A first aid kit is available in the classroom and on all field trips.
- An earthquake/emergency kit is available at school and is stocked with supplies.
- Monthly safety drills (alternating fire & earthquake) will be explained by and executed by the teacher and Health & Safety Coordinator for each class.

### Smoking

Smoking is not permitted at school meetings, in the classroom, on field trips or anywhere in the church or on church property at any time.

### Siblings & Childcare Guidelines

Your child's teacher wants you and your family members to feel welcome in the classroom. *You* are your child's first teachers, and *you* know what is best for your child. Our door is always open to you, whether you are teacher helping or not. We do ask that you always indicate to your preschooler in advance what your plan is for a particular day if you intend to linger after arriving at school. Perhaps on the way to school, you might offer to read a story to your child upon arrival in the classroom. Be clear about how long you will stay, and *FOLLOW THROUGH*.

Remind your child what you agreed upon, and keep your agreement. Your child will learn that they can depend on you to be there when needed, and will also learn to enjoy their independence in a child-centered environment.

Older and younger siblings are also welcome to *briefly* visit the classroom while in your constant care and supervision. The teacher cannot assume any responsibility for the siblings of enrolled children while they are in the classroom. However, we encourage you to assist your preschooler in sharing about class projects, activities, stories, etc. with your other child(ren), as well as extended family and friends. We ask that you be attentive to what is happening in the classroom, and take time to appreciate and share your child's contributions to our classroom community.

Younger siblings up to age 6 months, unless they are crawling, are welcome in the classroom while you act as a teacher helper. Crawling babies and children over 6 months old can be disruptive to the classroom, and their safety is questionable when exploring a room designed for older children. The very young, nursing baby may come along, but we advise that you wear your baby or bring along a stroller or infant seat to provide a safe and comfortable place to sleep. After the infant is 6 months old, leaving them with a relative, friend, or another member of the preschool will allow you to spend special time with your preschooler. The Church kindly allows MTP parents use of their Nursery for childcare for younger siblings on site while a guardian is teacher helping. You may ask the teacher for more information.

Mt. Tabor Preschool has a strong tradition of networking to provide childcare to cover teacher helping days and other activities of the school. On your class membership list, families with siblings are identified so you can get to know each other and swap childcare as needed.

Evening in-person meetings and special daytime events such as mini clean-ups may present childcare challenges. When possible, we may coordinate and provide childcare not only for preschoolers, but for siblings as well. We only require one family representative at most if not all events to help reduce the possible need for childcare assistance.

In those instances when childcare provision is available, you must SIGN UP IN ADVANCE so that the appropriate number of providers can be available. A small fee will be charged to help address the cost of providing this option (at the time of this writing the fee was \$6 per child). Because we arrange the number of childcare providers based on the number of children signed up, families with last minute cancellations may still be asked to pay the childcare fee. Children in childcare are cared for by an adult hired by MTP, as well as teens hired by the Preschool General Meeting Coordinator—usually in the classroom, but occasionally in the Big Room or Nursery.

# Separation & Support

## Leaving your child

Entering preschool can be an emotional experience for both parent and child. However, careful planning, and the knowledge that some separation anxiety and tears are normal, can make the transition from parent to caregiver as pleasant as possible. Listed below are a few ideas that may help your child adjust to the separation that school brings.

**DO:** Develop loving good-bye routines. Waving and blowing one last kiss at the goodbye window helps children know that the transition has been made.

**DO:** Involve the teacher. You need someone on the other end who will greet your child and ease the transition.

**DO:** Keep your good-byes short and sweet. In doing so, you convey the message that you have confidence in your child's ability to cope.

**DO:** Tuck a family picture or a loving reminder away in your child's backpack for her/him to look at later in the day.

**DO:** Talk about what will be happening at school during the day. Check the posted lesson plan and talk with your child about what he/she is most interested in.

**DO:** Send clear messages. Your child needs to know that you expect him to go to school no matter how much he/she fusses, cries or stamps his/her feet.

**DO:** Talk with your child about your after-school plans so she/he can look forward to being with you again.

**DO:** Build connections with other families from school. Invite children from the class for play dates so your child can build friendships that will make the transition easier.

**DO:** Ask your spouse or another family member to take a turn dropping your child off, or pick up one of your child's classmates on the way to school, and your struggles may disappear.

**DON'T:** Hover around. Your child may sense your anxiety, and this will make it more difficult for her/him to calm down.

**DON'T:** Sneak out of the classroom. You want your child to know unequivocally that he/she can trust you.

**DON'T:** Bargain or bribe your child to behave. Your little one should be allowed his/her feelings. It's natural to have anxiety about separating from parents!

**DON'T:** Take your child home. If you do, you send the message that if your child cries enough he/she won't have to stay.

**DON'T:** Get upset. By keeping an upbeat and positive attitude about your child's school, teacher and friends, you'll help your child feel secure and he/she will enjoy his/her time at school.

**DON'T:** Discuss issues/problems/concerns with the teacher in front of your child. Save conversations and questions for a time when you can speak privately.

**DON'T:** Be surprised if the transition to school becomes easier for you and your child, but becomes difficult again after holidays and sick days.

Please know that your child's teacher is here to support you! Let us work together to ease your child into the morning's activities. Please feel free to contact or speak to the teacher (when your child is not present) to discuss any worries or concerns.

## Getting Support

Some families in our school may experience difficult separations. If you are teacher helping and see that a child is having a tough time saying goodbye, invite her/him to get involved in an activity, to read a story, or to write a letter to the parent describing his/her feelings, once the parent has left.

Remember, you're not alone! While some children may appear to separate with ease, almost all children have had difficulty at some time or another. Connect with other parents, and plan to get together to talk about your feelings. When you arrive at school, read your child's cues. Even if *you* are feeling anxious, watch for signs from your child that it's time to leave. Let them know that you'll be back after closing circle time, and please, be on time to pick up your child! The anxiety a child feels when their adult doesn't return when expected may exacerbate separation issues. They will be waiting to tell you all about their busy morning at preschool!

# Early Intervention Policy

**Purpose:** Mt. Tabor Preschool (MTP) strives to provide a successful experience for all enrolled students. If a student does not appear to be benefiting from the program or environment, or if a student's classroom behavior or developmental level prevents other students from having a safe and successful experience, the intervention procedure below will be followed to facilitate a successful experience for all. If a parent has a concern about the behavior or development of an enrolled student, that parent will be expected to speak with the student's teacher in strict confidence, away from students and other parents in the school.

## Intervention Procedure

Throughout every step of this procedure, strict confidentiality will be maintained. Records of each meeting will be cooperatively written and distributed to each person present. An additional copy will be made available for the president(s) to review and file for future reference.

1. The teacher will meet privately with the parent(s) of the enrolled student in question. Specific concerns and expectations will be addressed by the teacher and the student's parents in a mutually supportive atmosphere. Together, parents and teacher will decide upon an action plan designed to meet the student's needs and help him or her to achieve any specified expectations within a designated time frame. At this point in the process, it is up to the discretion of the student's teacher to consult with a third party/early childhood professional (in confidence) for advice and guidance through this process. The student's parents will be made aware of any involvement by a third party, should the arise.
  - Before the close of the meeting, a future meeting will be scheduled to review the success of the plan and the progress that has been made, as it pertains to the behavioral or developmental concerns in question.
2. The action plan will be implemented. Observations and other relevant data will be recorded regularly by parent and teacher to document the student's progress.
3. The parents and the teacher will meet privately a second time, as scheduled. They will evaluate the situation and determine the success of the implemented action plan.
  - If the expectations have not been satisfactorily met, the teacher may choose to modify or redesign the action plan. In this case, the teacher will be in contact with a third party/early childhood professional to set up a classroom observation or assistance with the redesign of the action plan. A second evaluation meeting between the parents and the teacher will be scheduled and handled as above.
4. If sufficient progress is not made within the time frame decided upon for the redesigned action plan, a formal, professional assessment will be required. Continued enrollment at Mt. Tabor Cooperative Preschool will be contingent upon the parents' obtaining such an

assessment. This assessment must include a classroom observation of the student by the professional selected.

- The teacher and co-op president(s) will meet together with the parents at this time.
  - The teacher will determine in consultation with the parents whether the assessment is to be made by the Multnomah Education Service District or by a private professional.
  - The parents will have the option to seek the services of any qualified and willing therapist of their choice. A list of licensed therapists who are qualified and willing to perform the necessary assessment (to include classroom observation of the student) will be made available to the parents. This is not to be seen as a recommendation of any specific therapist, and the parents' choice of therapist is by no means limited to those on the list. The cost of the assessment is the parents' responsibility.
5. After the assessment is completed, the parents will meet with the teacher, co-op president(s), and consulting professional(s) to review the consulting professional's assessment and recommendations.
- If the professional considers that a cooperative preschool is not an appropriate learning environment for this student, the parents may choose to withdraw her or him from MTP.
  - Otherwise, the consulting professional, teacher(s), parents, and co-op president will jointly design a specific action plan. As with Step 1, specific goals, time frame, criteria for evaluation, and date for an evaluation meeting will be set.
6. The action plan will be implemented. Observations and other relevant data will be recorded regularly by parents and teacher(s) to document the student's progress.
7. A meeting of the parents, teacher, and co-op president(s) will be held, as previously scheduled, to evaluate the data and determine the success of the implemented plan.
8. MTP will explore all reasonable approaches to meeting the student's needs within this cooperative preschool setting. If at this point the student still does not appear to be benefiting from the program, or continues to prevent other students from having a safe and successful experience, the Board of Directors will terminate the student's enrollment.
- Input from the teacher and the consulting professional(s) will be given primary consideration.
  - This decision will be final and will not be open to appeal.
  - Assistance in finding a more appropriate program will be offered to the parents if desired.

# Community Events

Many of our families join a cooperative school in order to build their community. Each year, our school hosts many events outside of the classroom for us to come together and have a good time. Some of these events may vary from year to year, but here's an idea of what to expect.

**Summer Playdates** - Over the summer, these weekly playdates are a good opportunity for you and your child to get to know other families who will be attending school with you.

**Ice Cream Social** - As our annual school year kick-off event, the board hosts the ice cream social so families can get vital information about the coming school year, finalize outstanding paperwork, and get to know other incoming families.

**Fall and Spring Garden Clean-ups** - Organized by our Garden and Sustainability Coordinator, these clean-ups allow us to refresh materials in the playground and garden areas. Children are encouraged to help get the job done!

**Halloween Party** - A fun time to come out with the family to show off your costumes and do some Halloween crafts.

**Family Feast** - A harvest potluck that the whole family is invited to.

**Winter Holiday Party** - Come out to enjoy holiday music and crafts with the family.

**Auction Kick-off** - Typically adults-only, this event is to learn about the Spring fundraiser and how our families can help. The fundraising team organizes this year and will let families know what to bring. Childcare may or may not be available.

**Annual Auction** - Our biggest event of the year! Delicious food, good music, and fun themes make this annual event a blast, while raising a large portion of our school's annual budget.

**Pastries for Parents** - Organized as a thank you to parents for all the work they've done throughout the year.

**Classroom Clean-ups** - 3 mini clean-ups by the Senior Class and 1 large clean-up and classroom closure by the Junior Class will be organized by the Clean-Up Coordinator. Each family is expected to participate.

**Senior & Pre-K Graduation Party** - A special event to commemorate a child moving on to their next step in their education. Bring a camera and some tissues.

## Let the school year begin!

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information. We hope it will be helpful to you and your family as we spend the school year together. As the year progresses, please feel free to ask the teacher or president questions about any of the material contained in this handbook.

Again, welcome to Mt. Tabor Preschool! Let's have a great year!