



**The Growing Tree
Playcare and Preschool
2022-2023 Parent Handbook**

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Owned and operated by Jessica Dixon and Alli Atterbury

11415 NE 21st ST, Bellevue, WA, 98004

New Location as of Summer 2022: 12831 NE 21st PL, Bellevue

A Note from the Co-Founders

Dear Families,

We are so excited to share our unique story with you! As toddlers, we met at a home daycare on Mercer Island. We instantly became best friends and spent our childhood days playing “daycare” and “school” with dolls as our students. By the age of three, we knew we wanted to become future “daycare ladies.” After growing up on Mercer Island, managing our own babysitting business, and graduating from Washington State University with degrees in Early Childhood Development and Elementary Education, here we are as “Daycare Ladies!”

The Growing Tree Home Daycare opened in 2013. We hired our first teacher to join our team in 2014 as the business grew. With a need to expand our business, we opened The Treehouse Playcare & Preschool in 2016, offering half day preschool for children over 2.5 years old. In 2019 we opened our Pre-Kindergarten Annex to The Treehouse. Our amazing team of teachers grew to 15. And now, in 2022, we are thrilled to be expanding once more!

Our passion for providing a caring and loving environment for your child to learn and grow in has only deepened over the years. The two of us had a wonderful experience growing up in a nurturing, play-based environment. We strive every day to create the same impact on your child and to become their home away from home!

At The Growing Tree, we believe in building a community feel by providing opportunities for families to get to know their child’s teachers, friends, and other GT families! Throughout the year we have weekend events, including an annual visit to the pumpkin patch and a summer picnic. We hope to see you there!

Please feel free to contact us anytime or set up an appointment to discuss any questions or concerns.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to be a part of your child’s one and only childhood!

Sincerely,

Alli and Jessi

About Us

The Growing Tree is currently licensed as a Family Home Daycare with a capacity of 18 children and with 5 teachers.

We will be moving to 12831 NE 21st PL, Bellevue in Summer 2022, at which time we will be licensed as a Childcare Center through the Department of Children, Youth, & Families for 75 children from 6 weeks old through Pre-Kindergarten. We have begun the hiring process and plan for most new teachers to start at one of our current schools before moving.

The center will have six classrooms with the following ratios:

- Two Infant Classrooms (Under 1 year by Sept.) with 8 children, 2 lead teachers, and a teaching assistant
- One Waddler Classroom (1 year old by Sept.) with 13 children, 2 lead teachers, and a teaching assistant
- One Toddler Room (2 years old by Sept.) with 14 children, 2 lead teachers, and a teaching assistant
- One Preschool Classroom (3 years old by Sept.) with 17 children, 2 lead teachers and a shared teaching assistant
- One Pre-Kindergarten Classroom (4 years old by Sept.) with 15 children, 2 lead teachers and a shared teaching assistant

Teachers

Jessi has a degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Child Development from Washington State University. She previously taught preschool at Aldersgate Christian Preschool and nannied for multiple families before opening The Growing Tree Home Daycare in 2013.

Alli majored in Human Development with an emphasis on Child Development and Early Childhood Education at Washington State University. She previously taught in a toddler classroom at Country Village Day School and was a nanny. Alli and her husband, Teddy, have two children who also attend Growing Tree!

Ms. Brooke began working at The Growing Tree in March of 2016. She graduated from Boise State University with a degree in Psychology. Brooke decided to pursue her passion for teaching after moving to Seattle in late 2015. Brooke is now our Program Supervisor and her daughter attends Growing Tree.

At The Growing Tree all of our teachers have a deep passion and love for early childhood education and working with children! Our teachers are compassionate, patient, experienced and educated. All teachers have ongoing training each year in the following, but are not limited to:

- 30 hours Childcare Basics STARS training, 20 hours of annual ongoing STARS training
- Infant, Child, and Adult CPR
- First aid training
- HIV/ AIDS/ Bloodborne Pathogens Training
- Washington State Safe Food Handling
- Child Restraint, Safe Sleep, Families Experiencing Homelessness, and Medication Management through Department of Children, Youth, and Families
- Growing Tree's Health, Safety, and Emergency Preparedness Policies
- Lead teachers must have or be working towards a BA in an Early Childhood related field

Our entire staff has passed a Washington State Background check and has evidence of a negative tuberculosis test.

If you would like access to our records of training and development, staff policies, consistent care policy, health policy, liability insurance, or inspection reports please feel free to ask. If you are interested in any child development courses or parent resources, we are happy to share some of our favorites.

Philosophy

At The Growing Tree Playcare, Preschool, & Pre-K we aim to inspire a sense of wonder and playfulness, and build a foundation for a lifelong love of learning. Children have a natural curiosity and interest in the world around them, and we believe they need a balance that allows them to reach their potential without pushing them beyond their personal comfort limits. Our children will often be found connecting with nature both outdoors and indoors, getting messy, and treating each other with respect and compassion. Growing Tree is inspired by Reggio Emilia, Montessori and Waldorf approaches.

Play may seem simple, yet it is profound to a child's development. When a child laughs and wonders, explores and imagines, they are able to associate learning to something that happens naturally and joyfully. According to a recent report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), free and unstructured play is essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient. Through play, children also learn compassion and collaboration.

We believe in hands-on, child directed play. When children are learning and playing with joy, then it is a positive experience. Oftentimes, they don't even realize they are learning because they are so engaged! We believe in offering children educational and social opportunities at an age-appropriate level. With these experiences, imaginations will soar as they learn about who they are and how things work.

Our creative environment and caring teachers provide enriching experiences that stimulate children's senses and spark their curiosity to promote a love for learning that lasts a lifetime. Children are taught with hands-on materials and activities, songs and games, and experiences. Through play and teacher organized activities, we help to prepare your child with the social, emotional, and academic skills needed for a successful transition to kindergarten.

At The Growing Tree we strive to:

- 1) Nurture each child in developing and maintaining a positive self-concept.
- 2) Offer all children educational and social opportunities at an age-appropriate level.

3) Use positive reinforcement to create a warm, friendly, and well-managed learning environment.

4) Promote values of compassion and kindness.

5) Maintain a loving environment for your child that can be served as a home away from home, stimulating educational growth, offering a variety of learning activities, enhancing social awareness and responsibility, providing positive individual and group interaction, and promoting self- assurance.

Why Play is So Important!

Many American parents over-think the importance of early academic success. They believe that by pushing their toddlers and preschoolers harder to learn, they will be more academically successful in the future. However, learning through play gives children the opportunity to take ownership in their learning.

Play is not just something to do in between activities. It is an important activity in itself. Play is active and engages the whole brain, providing opportunities that are multi-sensory, creative, and imaginative.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics' report [The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds:](#)

- Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity and physical, cognitive and emotional strength
- Play is important to healthy brain development
- Play allows children to create and explore a world they can master, conquering their fears while practicing adult roles
- Play helps children develop new competencies that lead to enhanced confidence and the resiliency they will need to face future challenges
- When play is allowed to be child driven, children practice decision-making skills, move at their own pace, discover their own areas of interest, and ultimately engage fully in the passions they wish to pursue
- Play allows children to learn how to work in groups, share, negotiate, resolve conflicts and learn self-advocacy skills
- Play allows less verbal children to express their views, experiences and even frustrations

- Play offers parents and caregivers a wonderful opportunity to engage fully with their children
- Play allows for peer interactions and is thus an important component of social-emotional learning
- Play builds active, healthy bodies
- Play helps children adjust to the school setting and even to enhance children's learning readiness, learning behaviors, and problem-solving skills
- Play is a simple joy that is a cherished part of childhood

How Play is Promoted at Growing Tree

Our caring, compassionate, and nurturing teachers recognize the value of play. They are facilitators of learning, who believe in teaching the children how to think, not what to think. Our teachers facilitate play by providing appropriate indoor and outdoor play environments. Safety and age/developmental levels are carefully considered when designing activities. Play materials are related to our thematic instruction, along with the use of props, books, and different toys. Through daily observation of play, teachers can learn about children's social interactions, cognitive and language abilities, motor skills, and emotional development. Using these observations, our teachers can plan future experiences and curriculum that match the needs of each individual child.

Our teachers inspire children by asking open-ended questions, prompting children to think out loud, and starting unstructured conversations. Children and teachers take turns talking and listening to each other, and most importantly, asking questions! Language and literacy experiences are designed to help prepare children to become fluent readers.

Our bright, open, cheerful and home-like classrooms promote fun and child-directed activities. Large blocks of time are dedicated to play so that children's play goes uninterrupted and can become more complex. Children are given many choices and can choose activities that best suit their individual needs. The Growing Tree Playcare and Preschool offers a wide variety of play areas and materials, including dramatic play areas, spaces to create, cozy reading nooks, and shelves of open-ended toys such as loose parts, blocks, manipulatives, puzzles, and small world toys. Play is at the center of our curriculum and daily lesson plans.

Outdoor adventures are always encouraged for physical and explorative play! Our carefully planned outdoor space is used as an extension of the classroom. It encourages motor and social skills, helps refine existing cognitive structures, and constructs new ones. Art is often created outdoors, encouraging children to explore new possibilities.

From Home Daycare to Childcare Center: Consistent Care Policy

The Growing Tree got its origins as a small in-home daycare, something that we have always been proud of. Although we are expanding into a center, we will continue to strive to make our space a home away from home for your child. Our six beautifully designed classrooms will be filled with natural materials, soft colors, wooden toys, and cozy learning spaces. Although the building is licensed as a Childcare Center, our goal is to create each classroom to feel like an intimate homelike environment which fosters a sense of community and belonging. Each class will have live plants, decorative soft rugs, and unique materials that represent different cultures, a plethora of quality books, and open-ended toys and activities that promote wonder and exploration.

With smaller classrooms and lower teacher to student ratios, your child will get the very best individualized care. They are guaranteed to have a bounty of one-on-one interactions. We hope to have daily communication with you and always work together to personalize your child's care. We will do our best to follow your requests regarding your child's upbringing. We are a team! Every child at The Growing Tree will feel that they are special and loved. We strive to give your child stability and another set of adults who they can trust and depend on.

We spend ample time interviewing potential new teachers and conduct group interviews with the rest of the team. New teachers start with a 3-month trial and training period to ensure that it is a good fit. During this time, we may try the teacher out with a different age group or teaching team. After the 3 months we feel like the teacher is a match, they will sign a year contract. Since we implemented the trial period, we have found that teachers are much more likely to stay with Growing Tree for years after!

Another wonderful benefit is that children move classrooms together each September. This means that while your child's teachers will change as they age into the next classroom, they will continue to grow and develop with the same set of friends from the time they start until they leave for Kindergarten! We hope that your child's friends at The Growing Tree will become like siblings to them. These early friendships will create memories and social skills that will stay with them their whole life.

While we are small, and families will become close, we will keep all of your child's information confidential and safe.

Diversity/ Non-Discrimination Policy / Anti-Bias Statement

We embrace every child at The Growing Tree. Children will learn compassion and respect from each other's differences. Children learn there are different types of people, families, cultures, and backgrounds. Family traditions are celebrated! Children will feel respected and know they are valued members of the community. We celebrate each child's unique

learning style by providing a wide range of activities and experiences that will encourage their natural sense of wonder.

It is important that children are the decision makers during play. The children will choose what and where to play, roles for each player, and how the play will proceed. The Growing Tree provides diverse dolls, books, pictures, games, and materials that do not reinforce stereotypes. We introduce music and language from other cultures as developmentally appropriate, and welcome opportunities to learn about other cultures, abilities, family styles and genders.

The Growing Tree Playcare prepares children not only to become students who will work with others cooperatively and approach learning with joy and inclusion. Our teachers will always intervene to stop discriminating behavior in our classrooms and will redirect inappropriate conversations or behaviors.

Our school is open to all children, teachers and specialists and does not discriminate against an individual because of their race, creed, color, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, military status, marital status, religion, age, or ability.

Special Needs

If children have any special learning or developmental needs, whether formally assessed or not, The Growing Tree is happy to work closely with the family to accommodate the needs of the child. All information will remain confidential, but please make sure teachers are aware of any special needs in order to provide the best care possible.

We use the CDC's developmental milestone checklist to communicate areas of strength in your child's development, as well as areas where a child may have special needs or other concerns. We regularly partner with Kindering to provide developmental screenings and assessments and are happy to work with families to provide other outside resources as needed.

We will develop an individual care plan for each child with special needs and notify the department when a child with special needs is enrolled.

Hours of Operation

Growing Tree's Home Daycare is currently open 7:00am-5:30pm. Half days are offered between 7:00am-12:00pm and 12:30-5:30pm (Extended hours start when we move)

The Growing Tree opens at 6:30am and closes at 6:30pm. We ask for your compliance to our hours of operation. We value our teachers time and respect their lives outside of work.

Our extended day program is up to 10 hours between 6:30am-6:30pm. Our morning half-day program is between 6:30am-12:00pm. Our afternoon half-day program is between 12:30pm-6:30pm. We also offer a partial day program from 9:30am-3:00pm. Families can

choose a 5 day/week schedule, 3 days/week Monday/Wednesday/Friday, or a 2 day/week schedule. Please contact us for other schedule requests.

Due to limited parking and traffic constraints, your child must be dropped off during their 15 min scheduled drop-off time and picked up during their scheduled pick-up time as well. If you cannot drop off during your scheduled time, please let staff know so we can schedule you for a different time. Late fees will be strictly assessed.

Daily Schedule

Growing Tree's current location operates from 7:00am-5:30pm

We will follow a general daily schedule. Snacks, meals and rest times will be consistent every day. Other activities are subject to change due to the age group, weather and feel of the day. Each classroom will provide a daily schedule specific to their age group. Each class will have 2-3 hours of outside time each day, between the large playground and the smaller age-appropriate outdoor classrooms.

The following schedule is an example. An updated daily schedule for each classroom will be sent out prior to opening.

- 6:30 am: Welcome! Free play
- 7:00am: Early Snack
- 7:30 am: Small group activities, art, stories, table activities
- 9:00 am: AM Snack
- 9:30 am: Partial Day Drop Off
- 9:30 am-11:30: Morning Circle, Music, Creative movement, Sharing, Story, Art, Science, Outside Play, Specialists (Order and participation may vary)
- 11:30 am: Lunch often with stories and songs
- 12:00 pm: ½ day pick up and free play
- 12:30pm: ½ day drop off and afternoon Group Time
- 1:00 pm: Rest time/Nap/Quiet activities (Puzzles, coloring, books, music, outside)
- 2:30 pm: Snack (Available later for children still sleeping)
- 4:00-5:30 pm: Story/ Art, Free Play, and Outside Play (May vary on the day)
- 4:30: Late Snack
- 6:30 pm: Closing

*Children in diapers will be changed at least every two hours. Hands will be washed upon arrival and frequently throughout the day (see Handwashing Policy).

Mixed-Age Groups

Children of different age classrooms may be combined for up to two hours of the day at opening and closing, provided the staff-to-child ratio and group size designated for the youngest child in the mixed group are maintained.

We believe that all children can learn from each other, especially through play! The younger children thrive by modeling what the older children can do, and the older children learn about compassion and respect by helping the younger children and noticing that regardless of different abilities, they are all kids!

Curriculum

Throughout the year, we have designed a seasonal continuum of themes that we base our planning and activities around. We pair this with an emergent curriculum which is based on the current interests of the children. The length of each unit can vary. Letter sounds and recognition, numbers and mathematics, shapes, senses, colors and other kindergarten readiness skills are incorporated in lessons all year round. Social-emotional development is embedded throughout each and every day!

Each class will provide more information on their yearly curriculum to families upon entering the program, as well as kindergarten transition plans.

Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines for birth through kindergarten are closely followed as well as the Objectives for Development and Learning birth through third grade. PDF's can be found here:

https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/EL_0015.pdf

<https://teachingstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Washington-Birth-%C2%AD5-to-GOLD-4.14.17.pdf>

Children's development is also monitored using The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Developmental Milestones:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Other important guidelines and standards followed can be found from the following resources:

GOLD Objectives Assessment for Kindergarten:

https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/wakids/pubdocs/gold_hndt_objectives.pdf

Characteristics of Children Entering Kindergarten:

https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/wakids/pubdocs/characteristicsofchild_reenteringkindergarten-english.pdf

The Year at a Glance

September:

September is all about settling into the school year, making new friends, and learning important socio-emotional skills to help regulate emotions. We focus on what makes us each unique, our differences and similarities, family structures, and what it means to be a good friend. As summer transitions to fall, we learn about the changes in the season,

apples, farms, leaves, and pumpkins. Animal Encounters brings a petting zoo to Growing Tree as we kick off our farm studies!

October:

October is our month to celebrate autumn and all of the wonderful changes going on around us in nature. The opportunities for fall science experiences are endless as we dissect and identify parts of apples, pumpkins, and leaves, find out if they sink or float, and make jack lantern volcanoes! Making predictions, counting seeds, sorting apples and leaves by color, and pumpkin geoboards are just a few of our exciting math activities. This is our favorite month of art, STEM, baking, and sensory activities! Our visit to the pumpkin patch wraps up everything we have been learning about thus far. Families gather together to pet farm animals, pick pumpkins, go on a hayride, watch duck races, stroll through a corn maze, sip apple cider, and celebrate fall. Children are invited to wear costumes to school throughout Halloween week!

November:

Our fall studies continue as we discuss the meaning of Thanksgiving and talk about what we're grateful for. We read books that center Indigenous voices, learn about people native to the Seattle area, and talk about explorers and adventurers. We also introduce our Dinosaur theme, which is always very popular! We learn that dinosaurs lived long ago and are extinct now. During our dinosaur unit, children learn ways to identify, compare, contrast and classify characteristics of dinosaurs. Towards the end of the month we start our Holiday Drive for a local charity. Families are encouraged to talk about what they are grateful for at home to continue our school discussion.

December:

As winter quickly approaches, we learn about the changes the season brings. The leaves have all fallen from the trees, we dress in hats, mittens and scarves to stay warm, and we spend time with loved ones during many celebrated holidays. Families are invited and encouraged to share any special holiday traditions! We focus on the idea of giving as we learn about how to help others less fortunate than us, as well as letting our loved ones know we appreciate them. During the month of December we collect toys, household items, children's shoes and clothing, and gift cards for a local charity.

January:

Pajamuary means it's the coziest time of year! While the days are darker and the weather is colder, children are invited to stay cozy in their pajamas all month long! We return to our winter studies, learning about hibernation, arctic animals, and migratory birds. We focus on diversity, equality, and peace throughout the month, as we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. At the end of January or beginning of February, we rent out Kid's Quest Children's Museum for families to gather and play!

February:

We continue our theme of diversity, equality, and peace, while also adding the abstract concept of love. We talk about what it means to be a good friend and ways to show kindness to those around us. Children are invited to bring valentines to share with their

classmates! The rest of the month is jam packed with our exciting Community Helper unit, including Health and Nutrition studies, and Transportation. Families are invited to come in and tell the kids about their careers during our Career Week! We also have a special visit from the local Fire and Police Department.

March:

Spring is an exciting season at Growing Tree with the many changes in nature. We start the month with weather studies, move into gardens and the life cycle of plants, and begin our insect unit! Our duck and chicken eggs are placed in the incubator in the middle of the month and we learn about the changes going on inside the eggs! The season of spring brings many wonderful changes that we can observe and enjoy including blossoms on cherry trees, blooming tulips, and fluttering butterflies. We watch our caterpillars transform into beautiful butterflies and our seeds sprout into flowers firsthand. Oxbow Farms also makes a visit with organic soil and worms in tow to teach us about sustainable gardening and the importance of worms in the garden! We work on our own Treehouse garden, planting vegetables and flowers. Families are invited to bring a plant or seed from home to plant in our community garden. Towards the end of March, families are invited to our Spring Art Show which displays the brilliant and colorful masterpieces of our little artists!

April:

Spring is in full swing in April! We continue to study plants and insects and introduce our earth and space unit. Working with recycled materials, finding new uses for old things, and learning ways we can save the earth are at the core of this month. As soon as we return from Spring Break our ducks start to hatch! We watch the babies grow over the next few weeks, while learning how to be gentle with the tiny creatures and what they need to survive. Families have the opportunity to “duck-sit” and take home a duck for the night in a class-made take home kit.

May:

We are wild about wild animals! In May, we learn about wild animals from all over the world. Identifying the different sounds, characteristics, and habitats of wild animals is always a blast. We have visits from both The Reptile Man and Animal Encounters Australian Animals, as well as a weekend field trip to the zoo!

June:

We transition from wild animals to ocean animals! The ocean is a fascinating place and full of interesting creatures to study. We have a marine biologist visit, bringing scuba gear, shells, and shark jaws! We transition into our Beach unit as the season of summer approaches. The “school year” wraps up and our graduates prepare for graduation! Families of children headed to kindergarten are invited to our graduation celebration, where gowns are worn, diplomas are received, and hats are tossed!

July:

Just because the “school year” is over, it doesn’t mean we stop learning and growing at Growing Tree! July is based around the Pacific Northwest and we look into all of the

wonderful summer activities we can partake in (camping, swimming, picnics, hiking, etc.). We also learn about the geographical features of Washington State in particular. Towards the end of the month, we transition into our fairy tale unit and compare and contrast different versions of many popular fairy tales. Our annual summer picnic takes place in July! This is a wonderful reunion where current, past, and future families at Growing Tree and Treehouse gather!

August:

Fairy Tales and Art studies! As we wrap up our fairy tale unit, we transition into Art studies. We look into some famous works of art and artists throughout history. Different techniques, colors, materials, mediums, texture, and styles are practiced. We have a school of wonderful artists and there is no such thing as a bad piece of work at Growing Tree, especially if the process is enjoyed!

Religion and Cultural Traditions in Regard to Curriculum

Holidays are oftentimes an important part of a child's life and family traditions. At The Growing Tree we look to include all religions, races, cultures, and customs to create a classroom community. We would love to hear about holiday customs and traditions each family celebrates at home and welcome any and all ideas to learn about in the classroom! Many times, teachers' highlight the broader concepts related to particular holidays, such as family, sharing, foods, seasons, and friendship. If parents or children do not want to participate in any of our activities, alternative activities will be provided. Talk to your child's teacher about options.

Specialists, Field Trips, and Off-Site Policy

At Growing Tree, we do not leave the premises for field trips. Instead, we bring the field trips to us! We have a weekly music teacher, dance teacher, and Dizzy's TumbleBus that visit us. Children are given the option to participate but never forced to partake in any activity if they do not want to.

We also have seasonal events throughout the year on weekends. We set a date and place and invite all families. Each family will drive themselves. Events include a pumpkin patch, KidsQuest Children's Museum, Kirkland Children's Theater, Cougar Mountain Zoo, and a summer picnic.

We also have a few evening events throughout the year at Growing Tree such as Back to School Night, a Spring Art Show, and Graduation!

Calendar/ Holidays

Since we are a small business, we have pre-scheduled holiday and vacation time for our employees. Professional Development Days are worked into the calendar to ensure all staff members are able to attend. We hope that by providing a schedule to families in advance, you can make other arrangements or take family vacations of your own!

Tuition is based on a yearly rate and divided evenly among the 12 months of the year, regardless of closures, holidays, and vacations. Along with federal holidays, Spring, Summer and a Winter Break, we close once per season for Teacher Development and school maintenance. Scheduled closures include the following dates:

2022

- May 26th-27th- Professional Development Days
- May 30th - Memorial Day Observed
- June 20th- Juneteenth Observed
- July 4th-8th Independence Day/Summer Break
- September 1st-2nd: Professional Development Days
- September 5th- Labor Day Observed
- September 6th- First Day of School
- November 10th-Professional Development Day
- November 11th: Veterans Day Observed
- November 24th-25th: Thanksgiving
- December 26th-30th: Winter Break

2023

- January 2nd- Return from Winter Break
- January 16th- MLK Jr. Day Observed
- February 16-17th- Professional Development Day
- February 20th- Presidents Day Observed
- April 10th-14th- Spring Break
- May 25th-26th- Professional Development Day
- May 29th - Memorial Day Observed
- June 19th- Juneteenth Observed
- July 3rd-7th Independence Day/Summer Break
- August 31st- Professional Development Day
- September 1st-Professional Development Day
- September 4th- Labor Day Observed
- November 9th-Professional Development Day
- November 10th- Veterans Day Observed
- November 23rd-24th: Thanksgiving
- December 25th-29th: Winter Break
- January 1st- New Year's Day

*Subject to change, with at least one-month notification given

Weather Policy

We follow the Bellevue School District (BSD) for weather closures. If there will be snow in the Bellevue area, please check the Bellevue School District website for closures. For safety reasons, we will follow this schedule for late-start or closures. If there is a late start

announcement, The Growing Tree will open for the afternoon program only at 12:30pm. You can find more information on school closures on <https://bsd405.org>.

On a rare occasion, we may cancel school even if BSD announces a “late-start”, so please check your email for updates as well. We highly recommend playing it safe and staying home when road conditions are dangerous. We are not liable for any accidents that happen on our property due to snow or ice. During a heavy snowfall please leave work early and pick up your child while roads allow safe travel.

Other weather conditions that may warrant a school closure or early child pick-up include heat in excess of 100 degrees, cold less than 20 degrees, lightning storms (if there is immediate or likely danger), earthquakes, air quality emergencies, and/or lockdown notifications issued by a public safety authority. Additionally, if there has been a power blackout for 2 hours we will call you and children will need to be picked up.

Enrollment, Admission, and Disenrollment

The Growing Tree enrolls children 6 weeks through 5 years old.

All families must tour a Growing Tree or Treehouse location before applying. There is a non-refundable \$50 Application Fee. After applications are reviewed and if space allows, applicants are notified about an opening and start date.

The first month’s tuition is due to secure a space. There is an annual \$180 non-refundable Supply & Registration fee which covers September through August (prorated for mid-year start). A family has up to 14 days before starting at Growing Tree to cancel enrollment and will be refunded 50% of the first month’s tuition.

A current Certificate of Immunization Status on [the DOH form](#) and Growing Tree’s Registration forms must be submitted before a child can start. It is very important that the information provided stays current, so please continue to update administration if there are any changes. All information provided will be kept confidential through Procure and only accessed by administrators and the child's teachers as needed.

We do a trial period or slow start to ease your child into care. This helps ensure that Growing Tree is a good fit for each child to thrive and also eases the transition, especially for children who struggle with separation anxiety. The teachers will connect with families to create a plan that fits each child individually.

There is a 30 day notice policy when disenrolling a child from the program, however more notice the better. The 30 days will be paid in full regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance.

WHAT’S INCLUDED IN YOUR FEES AND TUITION

- Unconditional love and nurturing of your child
- Quality, educated, and experienced teachers and caregivers
- Dependability
- Cozy, clean, and safe space
- Nutritious snacks throughout the day from Green Sprouts
- Specialists throughout the week such as Dizzy's Tumble Bus, Music, and Creative Movement
- Daily communication about your child's day through Procure Connect
- Weekly class newsletters, quarterly progress reports, and twice-yearly developmental reports
- All arts and crafts supplies
- Quality toys, games, puzzles, books, musical instruments and playground equipment
- Cribs, mats, blankets, pillows, bibs, cups, plates, bowls, utensils, smocks
- Potty training assistance and wipes
- First Aid and emergency supplies
- All supplies needed for our holiday, birthday or other fun themed events that we have throughout the year
- Training and hiring for staff: CPR/First Aid certification, child development classes/conferences, continual STARS training's, advertising for teachers etc.
- Administrative costs, Procure Connect account, and bookkeeping
- Utilities: electricity, heat, air conditioning, water, garbage, gas, etc.
- Furniture: wear and tear, cleaning, replacing, repairing, etc.

Tuition

Please note that we charge tuition monthly. Tuition is based on a yearly rate and divided between the twelve months of the year, including holidays and vacations. We do not charge by the hour, so if your child leaves earlier than your registered time, you will still pay the entire full or half day fee.

Tuition is due the last day of every month for the following month. Please note the late fee of \$25.00 for the first 5 days tuition is late, and \$25 per day starting on the 5th of the month. Your invoice will be emailed out one week prior to the end of the month through Procure Connect. Any late fees or extended time will be added on to the next month's bill.

Payments can be made through Procure, check, or cash. Procure Connect charges fees for credit card use, so we recommend linking a checking account if paying electronically.

Monthly Fees (January 2021-August 2022)

Monthly tuition rates increase 5% for each family annually in September. There is a sibling discount of 5% for the older child's tuition.

Infant/Waddler/ Toddler (0-2 years by September 2022)

- Extended day: Up to 10 hours per day (6:30am-6:30pm)
- Half day: AM Pick up by 12pm or PM drop off after 12:30pm

- Partial Day: 9:30AM-3:00PM

	M-F	M/W/F	TU/TH
Extended Day	\$2870	\$1995	\$1435
Partial Day	\$2150	\$1500	\$1075
Half Day	\$1725	\$1200	\$860

Preschool & Pre-Kindergarten (3-6 years by September 2022)

- Extended day: Up to 10 hours per day (6:30am-6:30pm)
- Half day: AM Pick up by 12pm or PM drop off after 12:30pm (only offered if child has a younger sibling in Infant/Waddler Class)
- Partial Day: 9:30AM-3:00PM

	M-F	M/W/F	TU/TH
Extended Day	\$2645	\$1855	\$1325
Partial Day	\$1985	\$1395	\$995
Half Day	\$1590	\$1115	\$800

Absence

If possible, please try to keep your child's attendance as consistent as possible. This not only promotes their learning and development but fosters the relationships they make with peers and caregivers. Please notify us in the event of any absence. If your child will be absent for an extended period of time, but under a month, full tuition is still required. If your child will be gone for more than a month or multiple months (i.e. teachers with summers off), in order to hold their spot we ask for half of their normal monthly tuition. We are unable to do make up days or trade missed days, but additional drop-in days may be added if space is available.

Illness Policy

Due to COVID-19, our illness policy currently includes all household members, not just the child. If COVID symptoms are present, we require a negative COVID test to return to school. Temperatures will be taken throughout the day with a digital forehead scan thermometer.

It is not unusual when a child starts in any type of group play or childcare to develop more illnesses than before. Children who have been in childcare are LESS likely to develop illness

in their school age years, compared to children who have not been in childcare. All children are observed for signs of illness when they arrive and throughout the day. Parents will be notified right away if there are any signs or symptoms of illness.

If a child or staff member has any of the following illnesses or symptoms, they are required to leave the early learning space and must remain home for at least 24 hours after being symptom free:

- Unexplained rash
- Fever of 100F or higher
- Excessive cold including runny nose or cough
- Sore throat
- Vomiting more than two times in 24 hours
- Diarrhea more than two times in 24 hours or if stool contains more than a drop of blood or mucus
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies. Individuals with head lice, ringworm, or scabies must be excluded from the childcare premises beginning from the end of the day the head lice, ringworm, or scabies was discovered. The provider may allow an individual with head lice, ringworm, or scabies to return to the premises after receiving the first treatments
- Open sores or wounds discharging bodily fluids that cannot be adequately covered with a waterproof dressing or mouth sores with drooling
- Discharge from eyes or ears including Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Communicable diseases
- Lethargy, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or a significant change in behavior or activity level indicative of illness

It is everyone's responsibility to do everything possible to prevent contagious infections from spreading to the other children in our care.

If a child develops an illness while in our care, they will be isolated from the other kids (as best possible) and you will be contacted so that you can immediately pick up your child or make such arrangements. Your child may also be sent home if their illness or condition prevents them from participating in normal activities, requires more care and attention than teachers can reasonably give, the amount of care the child needs places the health and safety of other children in care at risk or there is a risk that the child's illness or condition will spread to other children or individuals.

State regulations require that they do not return until they have been symptom-free for at least 24hrs. This policy will be strictly enforced to keep the children as healthy as possible. This also applies to illness over the weekend or while at home. Please keep in mind that bringing a sick child to daycare can result in the teachers becoming ill and or potentially having to close the daycare for all the families in care. If your child is ill, please notify us regarding the nature of the illness, especially if it is contagious. If more than 3 children in a class have the same illness, we will notify the families in the class. If a staff member or child is diagnosed by a health care professional with a contagious disease, we must provide

written notice to the department, the local health jurisdiction, and the parents or guardians of the enrolled children within 24 hours.

If your child still appears sick or contagious, we ask that you bring a doctor's note clearing your child to be around other children at daycare upon their return. If a child has an individual care plan or is protected by the ADA, we will follow their plan.

Child Health and Immunization Records

In order to ensure the health and safety of all our children, it is crucial that we have the children's updated health and Immunization records. Please bring or send in updated records after your child has any new vaccinations. These records will be completely confidential and stored in your child's file on Procure. Records must be documented and signed on the Department of Health form found here:

https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/el-license/348-013_CertificateImmunizationStatusForm.pdf

Before attending an early learning program, a child must be vaccinated against or show proof of acquired immunity for the vaccine-preventable disease. A current and complete department of health approved certificate of immunization status (CIS) form or a department approved certificate of exemption (COE) form are required by the start of the program. Children exempted from immunization by their parent or guardian will not be accepted into care unless that exemption is due to an illness protected by the ADA or WLAD or by a completed and signed COE.

To accept a child who is not current with their immunizations, the parent or guardian must provide written proof that the child is scheduled to be immunized and provide a signed and dated statement detailing when the child's immunizations will be brought up to date. These records are available for review by department licensors, health specialists, and health consultants.

If an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs within the program, we will notify the parents or guardians of children exempt from immunization for that disease. We may exclude the child from the child care premises for the duration of the outbreak of that vaccine-preventable disease.

Medications

If your child takes medications daily, we ask that your doctor prescribe morning and/or evening dosages, so that you can give your child their medicine. If your child is ill enough to need over the counter medication administered throughout the day, it is an indication that they should be kept at home.

If it is absolutely crucial that medication be given while at Growing Tree, we follow WAC 110-300-0500.

Staff administering medication must first be trained in our programs medication policies and procedures, the department standardized training course in medication administration that includes a competency assessment and if applicable, a training from a child's parents or guardian (or an appointed designee) for special medical procedures that are part of a child's individual care plan. This training is documented and signed by the staff and the child's parent or guardian (or designee).

We will not give medication to any child without written and signed consent from that child's parent or guardian. Medication is administered pursuant to directions on the medication label while using appropriate cleaned and sanitized medication measuring devices.

Prescription medication will only be given to the child named on the prescription. Prescription medication must be prescribed by a health care professional with prescriptive authority for a specific child. Prescription medication must be accompanied with a medication authorization form that has the medical need and the possible side effects of the medication.

Prescription medication must be labeled with:

- (A) A child's first and last name.
- (B) The date the prescription was filled.
- (C) The name and contact information of the prescribing health professional.
- (D) The expiration date, dosage amount, and length of time to give the medication
- (E) Instructions for administration and storage.

Nonprescription (over the counter) oral medication brought by a parent or guardian must be in the original packaging. Nonprescription (over the counter) medication needs to be labeled with the child's first and last name and accompanied with a medication authorization form that has the expiration date, medical need, dosage amount, age, and length of time to give the medication. We must follow the instructions on the label, or the parent must provide a medical professional's note. Nonprescription medication must only be given to the child named on the label provided by the parent or guardian.

For other nonprescription medication, we must receive written authorization from a child's parent or guardian and health care provider with prescriptive authority prior to administering if the item does not include age, expiration date, dosage amount, and length of time to give the following medication:

- Vitamins
- Herbal supplements
- Fluoride supplements
- Homeopathic or naturopathic medication; and
- Teething gel or tablets (amber bead necklaces are prohibited).

Nonmedical items. A parent or guardian must annually authorize an early learning provider to administer the following nonmedical items:

- (A) Diaper ointments (used as needed and according to manufacturer's instructions)
- (B) Sunscreen
- (C) Lip balm or lotion
- (D) Hand sanitizers or hand wipes with alcohol, which may be used only for children over twenty-four months old
- (E) Fluoride toothpaste for children two years old or older.

We may allow children to take their own medication with parent or guardian authorization. Staff must observe and document that the child took the medication.

We will not give or permit another to give any medication to a child for the purpose of sedating the child unless the medication has been prescribed for a specific child for that particular purpose by a qualified healthcare professional.

We keep a current written medication log that includes:

- (i) A child's first and last name
- (ii) The name of the medication that was given to the child
- (iii) The dose amount that was given to the child
- (iv) Notes about any side effects exhibited by the child
- (v) The date and time of each medication given or reasons that a particular medication was not given; and
- (vi) The name and signature of the person that gave the medication.

Medication is stored and maintained as directed on the packaging or prescription label, including applicable refrigeration requirements. Medication is stored in a sealed container, away from food storage and inaccessible to children. External medication (designed to be applied to the outside of the body) is stored separately from internal medication (designed to be swallowed or injected) to prevent cross contamination.

We will return a child's unused medication to that child's parent or guardian. We cannot accept or give to a child homemade medication, such as diaper cream or sunscreen.

Allergies

We know how common allergies are and we will do everything we can to accommodate your child's needs.

Please provide written instructions (the individual care plan) from the child's health care provider and parent or guardian if your child has a known food allergy or special dietary requirement due to a health condition. Please identify foods that must not be consumed by the child and steps to take in the case of an unintended allergic reaction, as well as foods that can be substituted.

Please provide a specific treatment plan to follow in response to an allergic reaction. The specific treatment plan must include the names of all medications to be administered, directions for how to administer the medication, directions related to medication dosage

amounts, and description of allergic reactions and symptoms associated with the child's particular allergies.

If a child suffers from an allergic reaction while in our care, we will immediately administer medication pursuant to the instructions in that child's individual care plan. 911 will be contacted whenever epinephrine or other life-saving medication has been administered and we will notify the parents or guardians of the child.

Staff will review each child's individual care plan information for food allergies prior to serving food to children.

Example of Menu/ Nutrition

At The Growing Tree we believe in healthy growing foods! With many allergies and dietary restrictions, we understand that some families prefer to bring their own food from home. Snacks will be included in tuition, but families can decide to order lunches each month for \$4.50/day.

Meals will be delivered daily by Green Sprouts Food. Their menu features the high quality seasonal organic, natural, and sustainably farmed produce, meats and seafood and is sourced primarily from our bountiful Pacific Northwest. Their chefs "create brilliant, nutritious and engaging meals for young learners that draw from diverse sources and global cuisines." They have a regular menu and an allergen menu with equal nutritional value. All meals exceed requirements contained in the most current edition of the *USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)* standards, or the *USDA National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program* standards.

For more information about Green Sprouts including their monthly menus, visit their website here: <https://greensproutsfood.com/menu/>.

Unflavored milk and water are served with meals. We do not serve juice, unless it is a special occasion (i.e. making lemonade in the summer). All teachers follow Washington State safe food handling practices and hold current food handlers permits. Food is served in developmentally appropriate individual eating and drinking equipment which does not contain BPA and is in good condition. Teachers assist in serving food either individually or family style depending on the age of the classroom and sit with children during meals. Gloves, tongs or utensils are used to serve food, and everything will be cleaned and sanitized after each use. Personal water bottles must be labeled and will be sent home each day to be cleaned.

If you choose to bring your child's meals or snacks, please be sure they are clearly labeled with their name. Meals should follow USDA CACFP requirements found here: https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_MealBP.pdf. Meals will be supplemented if any food groups are missing.

We will develop a written food plan signed by all parties when accommodating a child's special needs, special diets, religious or cultural preferences, family preferences or other needs.

In our infant classrooms, we ask that families provide all food: milk/formula/breastmilk. Please bring pre-filled labeled bottles daily. We will follow your infant's feeding schedule and begin feeding baby food/solids when notified. USDA CACFP guidelines for infant meals can be found here: [https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP InfantMealPattern FactSheet V2.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP%20InfantMealPattern%20FactSheet%20V2.pdf)

Nut Free Policy

At The Growing Tree, we err on the side of caution when it comes to food restrictions. Nut allergies have become so common and we know how unpredictable allergies can be. We have chosen to be a nut free school in order to eliminate the possibility of a nut allergic reaction. Please help us by observing the nut-free policy, whether your child has allergies or not. Please do not pack any nut products in your child's lunch or bring products containing nuts for celebrations. If you are unsure about a certain food, please feel free to check with us. We greatly appreciate your support as we strive to provide a safe environment for all children.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays are a special time in a child's life, and they deserve a celebration! Families are welcome to bring a treat or activity to celebrate, but that is not required! Please make sure there is enough for every child, discuss plans ahead of time, and schedule the event with your child's teacher. Healthy snacks are always welcomed and encouraged.

If you would like to bring birthday treats for your child to celebrate with at school, these snacks must be store bought, in original packaging and uncut if fruits and vegetables. If families wish to bring in baked goods from home, please let us know ahead of time as we must get permission from other children's families before serving it.

Arrival and Dismissal

Growing Tree's Home Daycare parking is available in the main driveway or gravel lot to the south. Please use the Procare Connect app to sign in and out when dropping off and picking up.

In order to keep traffic flowing, pick up and drop off times are staggered into 15 minute windows during peak hours (7am-9am and 4pm-6pm). Please try to stay consistent with your scheduled time. During these peak hours, parents are encouraged to pull into a loading and unloading parking space and a staff member can greet you at your car to walk your child inside. If there are open parking spaces or during non-peak hours, parents are welcome to park and bring their child to the office for check in.

Signing your child in and out of The Growing Tree is extremely important. It is done through the Procare Connect App on your phone, by scanning a QR code, or by typing in your 4 digit PIN on the iPad in the front entrance.

You may also use this app to add any important notes/information that we may need throughout the day. Please leave any and all phone numbers of where you can be reached throughout the day.

If someone else is going to pick up your child (nanny, friend, family member), please update your Procare account to include all drivers and emergency contacts. We also need a copy of their driver's license and written parent permission. Your child's safety and whereabouts are extremely important to us.

You always have access to your child during our regular hours of operation. Due to limited parking during peak traffic hours (7am-9am and 4pm-6pm), we ask that you communicate with staff either verbally or in writing if you will be coming to pick up your child outside of your scheduled window so we can accommodate your schedule change.

In order to keep the drop off process running smoothly, we do ask that you be brief. For many children, the longer their parents stay the harder the separation anxiety is.

Early/Late Policy

As much as we love children, we need our own down time to regroup! Please respect our teachers time. Also, we must be very careful not to exceed our capacity at any point in the day and often have children coming before or after. Our early fee (before 6:30am or 12:30pm for half day children) and late fee (after 10 hours of care, 3:00pm for partial day, or after 6:30pm) is \$5.00 for the first 5 minutes, and then \$5 for every 1 minute after that. We understand if there is an emergency, however, if you are consistently late (3+ times a month) an additional \$50.00 will be added to your next month's invoice.

The same goes for tuition payments. Tuition is due the last day of the month for the following month, not the first day your child is in care. We have a \$25.00 late fee for the first 5 days tuition is late, and \$25/day after that. A child can no longer attend school if payment is not made by the 10th of the month, until tuition is paid. We rely on tuition to keep our center running.

Clothing and Supplies

Kids will be kids! Getting MESSY is a big part of our program. Please dress your children in play clothes that can get paint or mud on them.! With Seattle's spontaneous weather, your child may need a coat and a short sleeve shirt on the same day. Always layer, layer, layer. Better safe than sorry when it comes to warmth.

Please bring a labeled backpack or bag each day for your child with the following labeled items:

- Two changes of clothing including pants, shirt, socks, and underwear (if applicable)
- Raingear during rainy months (rain pants/rain coat or rain suit & rain boots)
- Hat and gloves during cold months
- Sunscreen from May-September with a medication form
- Lunch from home (if applicable)
- Infant pre-filled bottles and infant food (if applicable)
- Pacifier, lovey, or sleep sack (if applicable)
- Daily supply of diapers or pull ups (if applicable)
- Diaper cream with a signed medication form (if applicable)
- Wipes if another brand is preferred (we provide Kirkland Signature)
- Blanket or comfort item for rest time

If your child has a toy that they would like to bring, they need to be willing to share it with the other children. Be aware that items from home could get lost or broken, so keep the pricey stuff at home! Each classroom may have their own policy on this.

Communication

Communication is an extremely important part of our program. We value being a second home for your child and becoming your partners in parenting! Please keep us up to date on any changes (big or small) that may affect your child and their development so we can best help them. We try to have day to day, face to face communication, however some drop-off pick up times can be busy. If you or the teachers have specific comments regarding your child, a time to talk privately can be scheduled or it can be addressed over an email or phone conversation. We message parents throughout the day through the Procure App with small updates, pictures, and questions regarding their child.

Growing Tree updates regarding curriculum, activities, and upcoming events/news will be communicated through Procure and/or our private family Facebook page (this will vary per class), along with helpful parent resources and home extensions.

Quarterly individual updates are sent home. The information on these updates rotate from a child's likes, dislikes, friendships, favorite activities, progress and growth, communication skills, social-emotional development, physical development, and cognitive development. Twice per year individual progress reports are emailed home to families. These reports summarize the child's growth in the areas listed above, as well as address areas that need improvement. Our goal is to work as a team with families to help each child reach their true potential and have the best childhood possible! We are your partners in parenting. If a teacher has any concerns regarding your child's development, parents will be notified as needed. Overall, we believe children develop at their own pace, and assessments are primarily used as a guide. At Growing Tree, we respect and support parent's decisions and wishes regarding their child's care.

We work closely with Kindering of Bellevue for support and observation for specific concerns regarding development. We also have relationships with speech therapists if parents would like their child observed in a school setting. We are happy to be of support and guidance as this time is crucial in their development.

Due to COVID we are not having families enter the classrooms while other children are at school. We hope by the time we open it will be safe to have families come into the classrooms again! We have an open-door policy so parents are able to visit their child throughout the day, however this can be very difficult on a child when they have to say goodbye again. Please let us know with a text or call so we can let the child know it is just a visit, not pick up.

Communication and emailing the teachers is done through Procure Connect.

Emails for scheduling and tuition questions are sent to Jessi and Alli at info@thegrowingtreeplaycare.com. Other administrative questions will be forwarded to our Program Supervisor or Assistant Director (Email TBA).

Hand Washing

Washing our hands and the children's is key to keeping our environment healthy and clean! We will wash hands many times throughout the day including after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after playing outside, and after having contact with animals. Throughout playtime, we frequently offer the children The Honest Company hand sanitizer (magic soap) as an additional germ buster!

Handwashing Procedure:

- (a) Wet hands with warm water
- (b) Apply soap to the hands
- (c) Rub hands together to wash for at least twenty seconds
- (d) Thoroughly rinse hands with water
- (e) Dry hands with a paper towel, single-use cloth towel, or air hand dryer
- (f) Turn water faucet off using a paper towel or single-use cloth towel unless it turns off automatically; and
- (g) Properly discard paper single-use cloth towels after each use.

Staff assist children in washing their hands upon arrival, after using the toilet or diapering, after outdoor play, after touching any bodily fluids (after wiping nose), before and after eating, and as needed by other circumstances.

Staff must wash their hands when arriving at work, after helping a child in the bathroom, before and after diapering a child, after using the bathroom, after attending to an ill child, before and after preparing/serving/eating food, before preparing bottles, before and after giving medication, after handling bodily fluids, after breaks, after being outside, after handling garbage, or as needed by other circumstances.

Hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) and wipes may be used for children over 2 years old in addition to handwashing and will be actively supervised.

Infant, Waddler & Toddler Care

Infants will be supervised at all times. During naptime they will be placed on their back with their arms free to sleep without anything else in the crib, and teachers will be in hearing and visual distance. Each infant room has eight cribs, one for each child. Crib sheets will be changed in between each infant. Please provide any necessary items such as a sleep sack or lovey. All infant teachers are trained in Safe Sleep. If an infant turns over while sleeping, the teacher will return the infant to their back until the infant is able to independently roll from back to front and front to back. Teachers will check breathing patterns, temperature, and make sure no clothing is covering their face while sleeping.

Comfort will always be provided to children who are hurt, upset, crying, or in distress. Teachers provide physical comfort through holding, cuddling, rocking, carrying children. Teachers intervene during negative social interactions with peers such as biting, pulling hair, pushing, and toy taking. Teachers teach the toddlers the skills they need to solve the conflicts on their own as it becomes developmentally appropriate.

Families provide a general daily schedule or routine for their child. The teachers will use this as a guide for sleep times, feeding, and wake times based on the infants' nutritional and developmental needs. As infants' needs change, teachers and families will communicate any updates. An area for breastfeeding mothers will be available, as well as education materials and resources requested for support. If pacifiers are used, please clip them to your child's clothing daily or bring them in a labeled container for naps.

Please bring pre-filled capped bottles daily and any solid foods which will be immediately refrigerated. Label everything with the infant's full name and date. Bottles will be warmed up in a bottle warmer and temperature checked before feeding. Infants will be held while bottle feeding until they can hold their own bottle. Feeding will end when infants' show they are done eating. All bottles will be returned home each day. Any formula that is not consumed after an hour and any leftover solid food will be thrown out. Unused refrigerated breast milk will be returned at the end of the day. When it is developmentally appropriate teachers will talk with families about switching to a sippy cup.

Age-appropriate solid foods should be introduced no sooner than four months of age. This will be based on an infant's ability to sit with support, hold their head steady, close their lips over a spoon, and show signs of hunger and being full, unless identified in a written food plan or with written medical approval. The texture of the food should increase from strained to mashed to soft table foods as a child's development and skills progress between six and twelve months of age. Soft foods offered to older infants will be cut into pieces one-quarter inch or smaller to prevent choking. Infants and toddlers will begin to self-feed as soon as developmentally appropriate and will sit in a highchair or child-size table. Children

will be removed from their chair as soon as they are done eating. Children will not share bottles, sippy cups, eating utensils, or plates.

Infants will have supervised tummy time at least 3 times a day and loads of interaction with caregivers and other children! Infant activities include outside play, reading with teachers, music, art, tummy time and movement and other sensory activities. The classrooms are designed with high quality materials and toys that are developmentally appropriate, including wooden blocks and puzzles, rattles, teething toys, busy boxes, board books, soft books and picture books, counting and measuring toys, sensory balls, and natural materials which provide a sensory rich environment. All materials and surfaces are clean and washable or disposable, non-poisonous and free of toxins. Materials are large enough to prevent swallowing or choking. Toys are beautifully displayed on shelves for children to access easily. Any broken or recalled toys will be removed immediately.

We will work closely with families to support each child's language and culture. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum helps develop infant and toddler language, communication and social skills through talking with and listening to children, encouraging them to make sounds, and talk about feelings and desires. We value one on one interactions, giving them lots of attention through playing and reading, singing, rhyming and movement. We believe infants and toddlers deserve to be talked to with respect and kindness.

In addition to our main play area, infants and toddlers share an outdoor classroom. This space has a padded ground, tires to climb on, tunnels to crawl through, ramps to climb up, water tables, and a sand pit. Their class has access to this outdoor space at any time and is especially helpful during nap times when some of the children are awake.

Diapers will always be changed every 2 hours, or more frequently if needed. Diapers are brought from home and stored in the changing table drawers. We provide Kirkland Signature wipes. If preferred, other wipes may be provided with a child's name.

We will be in contract with a childcare health consultant to provide health consultations to support the practices of staff working with infants and to support the needs of individual infants. Monthly on-site visits will be conducted. Do not hesitate to ask for additional resources!

Diapering and Potty Training

In each classroom with children who require diapering, there is a moisture resistant diaper changing station for lay-down and stand-up diapering. Changing areas have a sink within arm's reach and children's diapers (provided by each family) are stored nearby. Children will not be left unattended while on the changing surface. Surfaces are disinfected between each use, teachers' hands are washed before and after, and children's hands are washed afterwards. Over the counter or prescription diaper cream can be brought from home with a signed medication form and each use will be logged.

You are welcome to bring reusable or cloth diapers for your child. They will not be rinsed, will be placed in a securely sealed moisture impervious bag, stored in a separate disposable container and be given to the child's guardian at the end of each day.

Whenever you feel your child is ready, we will assist you at potty training your child. Every child learns differently, and we will work with you to find a potty training method that works for your child. Children are encouraged through positive reinforcement, developmentally appropriate methods, and culturally sensitive methods. Please bring extra clothes during this time, because accidents happen!

We have found that pull-ups work best once a toddler is using the toilet at least 80% of the time and can keep their pull-up dry throughout most of the day. For sanitation issues, please continue to bring them in pull-ups until they are accident free. When a child is developmentally ready, teachers may use a stand-up diapering procedure done in the bathroom or diaper changing area.

Our toilets are child sized with separation barriers for privacy. We do not use portable children's potties. Toilet areas are disinfected at least once per day or when soiled.

Nap/Rest Time

Infants will follow their own sleep schedule and will be placed on their back in a crib, with no blanket or extra items. Waddlers and toddlers who are still taking multiple naps in the day will be able to sleep on their own schedules on a nap mat. Between 1:00 and 3:00pm in the afternoon we have a set rest time for the Waddler, Toddler and Preschool classrooms. Children each have a nap mat and can bring a blanket from home which will be sent home weekly to be washed. Once children are beginning to outgrow naps we still require a rest time, but they may play quietly in the classroom or a teacher will take them outside after a short rest period.

Our nap mats are moisture resistant and have a tightly fitting sheet. Sheets are washed in between children, and at least once a week if used by the same child.

If an infant falls asleep in their car seat, or any equipment not intended for sleep, a teacher will move them to a crib. Teachers will consult with the families before transitioning a child from a crib to a nap mat.

Outdoor Play

Getting outside for at least 2-3 hours a day (usually more!) is our priority. We have one shared outside space for all classrooms, in addition to 3 smaller side spaces which we will use for outdoor classrooms. There will be one outdoor classroom for the Infant classes, one outdoor classroom for the Waddlers and Toddlers, and one outdoor class for the Preschool and Pre-K class to share. We encourage all families to come each day prepared with weather appropriate gear such as a rain suit or rain pants and raincoat, rain boots, hats, and gloves. Teachers are positioned outside to supervise all children and no child will ever

be left unattended outside. Children are encouraged to play freely regardless of weather conditions and clothes and shoes may get wet and muddy. Upon going inside children are promptly changed into dry, clean clothes and outdoor gear is cleaned and dried to the best of our ability. We teach the children that our clothes function as protection from the elements and families are encouraged to send their child in comfortable clothes they don't mind getting dirty.

Clothing to bring for outdoor play:

- A pair of labeled rain pants/rain suit and CLEARLY LABELED rain boots. These items should be easy to pull on and easy to take off for maximum outside time!
- A labeled raincoat, or layers so that children will be comfortable in all weather.
- Easy-on/ easy-off summer shoes
- A change of clothes in case they get wet or dirty!

Water Activities

During warmer weather months, we often incorporate water play (water table or sprinkler) into our activities! Kids are welcome to bring swimming suits or a change of clothes to use during water play, as well as water-appropriate shoes (Check with your teacher). During water activities, a teacher will always maintain a 1:1 ratio with infants participating in water play, and have a continuous hold on infants, toddlers, and children with special needs as required. Toddlers will be within arm's reach when in water.

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is very common for children to experience when starting at daycare. In order to help your child make a smooth transition into our care, we have found that the quicker the parent drops-off their child, the easier it is for the child to adapt to the environment. We will do our best to stay in contact with the parents throughout the first few days (giving updates, sending photos, etc.). When children can sense a fear of separation in their parent, they are likely to have a harder time adjusting. Try to make drop-offs quick, model excitement to your child, and remind them you will always be back to pick them up. Most children make a smooth transition into childcare within the first two weeks. If there is no sign of progress adjusting into our care, we may not be the right fit for your child, and that's okay! Every child is different and will find their niche eventually. Again, our goal is to provide a positive experience for all children and families.

Biting, Hitting, and Tantrums

Biting is a very common behavior among young children. It can be a very challenging behavior for both parents and caretakers to address. There are many different reasons why children bite. We will do everything possible to reduce biting in daycare, but unfortunately, biting does happen. In the circumstance that a child is going through a biting stage, we will work together with the parents to find strategies and to keep all children safe. Parents will be asked to pick up their child if it's a repeated issue throughout the day.

Hitting and tantrums are a common behavior for toddlers as they learn to express emotion. Our first response with these behaviors is to allow the child to 'cool down' in a safe environment where they will not be able to harm themselves or others. By ignoring tantrums, children usually realize that the behavior does not help them get their way and eventually begin to use other communication skills. When a child's aggressive behavior becomes a safety issue, the child will be separated from the other children and their parents will be notified.

Discipline Policy

Treating each other with peace and compassion is our main house rule. As we are aware, kids will be kids! Learning how to treat themselves, each other, and things are all a part of growing up. When discipline is necessary, we will follow our house rules and treat every child with kindness, respect, and compassion. Modeling appropriate and mature behavior is key, as well as explaining to children the natural and logical consequences related to the child's behavior in a reasonable and developmentally appropriate manner.

Under no circumstance will your child be struck, spanked, hit, slapped, yanked, shaken, kicked or any other physical form of discipline. Teachers will not use or tolerate any profanity, obscene language, put-downs, or cultural or racial slurs, angry or hostile interactions or threats of physical harm. There will be no intimidation, gestures, or verbal abuse including sarcasm, name calling, shaming, humiliation, teasing, derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family, emotional abuse including victimizing, bullying, rejecting, terrorizing, extensive ignoring, or corrupting a child. A child will never be restricted from breathing, bound, deprived of sleep, food, clothing, or use of the bathroom/diapering as a form of punishment. A child will never be locked in a space or forced to do excessive physical exercise.

At The Growing Tree we believe in positive reinforcement, immediate and consistent consequences, time to step out of the situation, and redirection. Teachers model and teach social skills such as taking turns, cooperation, self-control, respect for the rights of others, treating each other kindly and conflict resolution. Teachers try to plan ahead to prevent problems and let children know what events happen next and explain consistent clear rules. We will work together with you to alter any negative behavior and communicate daily about any disciplinary actions. Instead of putting a child in "time-out", we have chosen to use a Montessori based method called the "Peace Table". This is a small table where a child can take a moment to relax after getting worked-up over a situation, talk about a problem, or express feelings through a mature manner. Children who are too young to understand a problem will be redirected to a different activity.

We will immediately intervene if we become aware that a child or children are teasing, fighting, bullying, intimidating, or becoming physically aggressive and may separate a preschool age or school age child from other children when that child needs to regain control of him or herself. We refer to this as "Giving our body a break until we can play safer or make safer choices" During separation, the child would be under direct supervision

of a staff member and the time would be minimized and appropriate to the individual child. Developmental level, language skills, special needs and ability to understand consequences are all accounted for. Teachers will talk with the child about the reason their body is taking a break and discuss ways the conflict could be handled differently in the future.

Restraint Policy

A child will only be restrained for the safety of themselves or others. When physical restraint is necessary, it will be limited to holding a child as gently as possible to accomplish the restraint, for the minimum amount of time necessary to control the situation. We will never use bonds, ties, blankets, straps, car seats, highchairs, activity saucers, or heavy weights to physically restrain a child. Trained staff must remove themselves from a situation if they sense a loss of their own self-control and concern for the child when using a restraint technique if another staff member is present. Staff must intervene when the provider observes another staff member or volunteer using inappropriate restraint techniques. If physical restraint is used, staff will report to the guardian and DCYF, and assess and document the incident including the staff involved, duration, and what happened before. We will develop a written plan with input from the child's primary care or mental health provider, and the parents or guardians, to address underlying issues and reduce need for further physical restraint if physical restraint has been used more than once and a plan is not already a part of the child's individual care plan. The department will be notified when a written plan has been developed.

For children with special needs who may need to be restrained on occasion, a policy will be written with teachers, caregivers, and doctors. This policy and plan would be appropriate for the child's developmental level, abilities, and language skills. It would be directly relevant to the child's behavior and designed to be consistent, fair and positive. All staff who work with the child would be trained specifically on the individual plan.

Confidentiality

Each child and family's information is kept confidential, and only shared when needed between teachers in order to best support the child. All records will be only accessible to staff. Legal guardians must authorize anyone other than themselves and staff to gain access to the child's health and immunization records. It is our goal to ensure the confidentiality of all families.

Photography

Throughout the day, we take pictures of the children involved in various activities. Photos help document the learning that takes place each day! Each classroom may have different methods of photo sharing, whether that be through Procure or a closed Facebook group. If you prefer your child is not photographed, or not posted on Facebook, we are more than

happy to accommodate it. Please comment on your registration form and let us know in person as well so we can make a plan to share information differently.

Parental Termination Policy

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating. Parents are required to give 30 days written notice when they decide to terminate childcare. The 30 days will be paid in full, regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance.

Anyone who terminates daycare and has a balance that is outstanding will need to have the account settled within 30 days. All accounts not settled within 30 days will be turned over to a collections agency regardless of the amount owed. All accounts turned over to collections will have a \$15 per day late fee plus 35% collections fee added to the amount due.

Provider Termination Policy

At Growing Tree, we do our best to fit the needs of every child and will try different solutions before terminating care. Guardians will be notified about any incidents that could lead to termination. A phone call or meeting will be set up to discuss a plan. If it is due to a child's behavior, we always recommend talking with your pediatrician. We work closely with Kinderling of Bellevue and may request a classroom visit. We will look at environmental factors such as sleep and eating patterns, and potential triggers such as over stimulation. We might suggest changing the schedule if available, shortening hours, or switching days.

We reserve the right to terminate a child for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- The child exhibits behavior that presents a serious safety concern for that child or others (i.e biting, climbing shelves or furniture, attempting to escape, physical aggression towards another child or staff, other behaviors that require one on one teacher attention)
- We are not able to reduce or eliminate the safety concern through reasonable modifications
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after two weeks, without any sign of progression
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure to pay tuition
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Physical, verbal abuse, or inappropriate behavior by a family member, parent, or guardian
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations

- Serious illness of child

We, the provider, reserve the right to give notice of immediate termination where there are circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance. If a child's behavior becomes unmanageable, parents will be called to pick up their child immediately. Our priority is to provide a positive experience for all children and families. In the event of provider termination, we will refund the parent for any remaining paid days in the pay period and provide the parents with childcare resources, such as ChildCare Aware 1-800-446-1114.

In the event that we, the provider, decide to terminate the childcare relationship due to repeated contract violations, by the parent or legal guardian, we reserve the legal right to terminate the childcare relationship without notice. To avoid the unfortunate situation from occurring, parents and legal guardians are required to thoroughly read the entire childcare contract. Parents and legal guardians are required to ask for a detailed explanation of any childcare rules and regulations they do not clearly understand prior to enrolling the child in the child care.

Emergency Preparedness

Despite a very watchful eye, sometimes accidents do happen (especially with children). Should the unthinkable arise, we want you to feel confident we have a plan in place and are prepared to serve your child to the best of our ability.

In case of an injured child such as but not limited to: Small bumps, scrapes and cuts we will administer first aid and the guardian will be notified through Procure and with an incident report at pick up time as to what happened. For more severe injuries, we will call a guardian, or if needed 911 and then notify the guardians. Should the child need to be transported, we will relay the guardian's choice of hospital as indicated by intake records. Should we be unable to contact a guardian we will call the persons listed on your emergency form. All staff are certified in both CPR and First Aid.

If ever we could not locate a child, we will contact the police and the child's guardians immediately. We will then also check outdoors and neighboring businesses. In case of accidental poisoning, taking the wrong medication, or too much of a medication we will call the poison control to determine what the child got into, follow the poison center's recommendations, call 911 if needed and alert guardians of the incident.

In case of a fire or the need to evacuate, we will bring the children to the cul-de-sac at the end of NE 21st Place. The building is fully sprinklered with voice-activated alarms and pull alarms. If a person discovered a fire or need to evacuate, they would pull the alarm. In the event that the alarms did not sound, staff will use the whistles on their emergency backpacks. We have an evacuation route posted in each classroom, along with emergency backpacks containing children's information and first aid kits. Infants will be placed in the cribs which have wheels and evacuate out their classroom exterior door. The Toddler and Waddler classes will be evacuated out of their classroom exterior doors holding hands or

using the Infant room cribs. The Preschool and Pre-K rooms will evacuate out the main exit and proceed through the parking lot. Staff will carry any children who need assistance or have special needs. Each class will bring their iPads with student roster, emergency contacts, and medication records. Administration team will bring any medications needed for individual children. Teachers wear walkie-talkies to communicate with other teachers, but also keep their phones in the classroom for emergencies. Ratios will be maintained while waiting for students to be picked up. Guardians will be notified whether or not their child needs to be picked up through a school wide email/text notification and individual calls. As children are picked up, parents will sign them out and staff will also check them off the written roster. We do fire drills monthly so that the kids are prepared for such events. If some other emergency comes up, parents or other authorized adults will be notified to pick up their child as soon as possible. Your child's safety is the most important thing to us, and we will do everything in our power to protect them from harm.

During an earthquake, we will help the children find safe places to get cover (i.e. under tables, against walls, away from windows and bookshelves). When it is safe to do so, we will evacuate quickly after to the driveway with our emergency backpacks, iPad including the roster, children's records and emergency contact information, and teachers' phones. An emergency message will be sent to all families for pick up, unless otherwise notified by officials that the school is safe to reenter.

In the event of a large-scale natural disaster, we are prepared to safely keep children overnight at school for up to 3 days if needed. We have emergency supplies, disaster kits, water, and extra food stored in our basement. When a child starts daycare, we ask that families bring a Disaster Kit to keep at school (and donate to school when the child leaves the program). The disaster kit can be in a large zip lock bag and contain a family photo, comfort item, a few diapers, comfort snack, and any additional emergency supplies you would like to pack.

In the event of a lockdown, we will keep the children inside away from the doors and windows. Doors will be locked, and curtains will be pulled. If a harmful person were attempting to get into the building, teachers would bring children into the attic and basement. Should there be a neighborhood lockdown, we will notify all parents/guardians by SMS/Email and phone to let you know of the situation, so you don't try to come into the neighborhood to pick up your child until it has been deemed safe to do so. In the event of a terrorist attack anywhere within the U.S.A. all parents/ guardians will be required to come get their children immediately. We will do what government officials instruct at the time if it affects our area and do our best to keep the children safe until you arrive.

Lockdown, fire and earthquake drills are done monthly and recorded. If you ever fear your child is in any sort of danger while in our care or not, please communicate with us so we can help keep your child safe.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

All parents want the best for their children. Sometimes abuse is intentional and sometimes it is not. In any case, the child must be protected. We will try to respect your values and methods of child rearing within the bounds of safety and responsible child care practices. However, if there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, we must report such an incident to the proper law enforcement agency or the department. This includes suspected physical, sexual or emotional child abuse, child neglect, child endangerment, child exploitation, a child's disclosure of sexual or physical abuse and inappropriate sexual contact between two or more children. Families also have the right to report any suspicions or incidents that you observe regarding your child or any other child in our child care center.

Alcohol, Drugs, Cannabis, and Weapons

Alcohol, smoking/vaping, or any drug use is strictly prohibited on the premises by any staff, caregiver, guardian, or other. No person under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or cannabis will be permitted on the premises. Guardians will not be allowed to pick up children if alcohol or drug use is indicated by behavior or smell. In that event we will not allow the child to leave with the person under the influence and we will call the names listed on your emergency form to come pick up the child. Under no circumstances will weapons be allowed on the premises.

Parent Resources

Early Learning Development Guidelines:

https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/EL_0015.pdf

Washington Department of Children, Youth & Families: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov>

DCYF Parent Resources: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-parenting/parenting-resources>

Support and Educational Materials for Breastfeeding Mothers:

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/BF-Guide-508.PDF>

CDC Developmental Milestones:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Washington Kindergarten Readiness: <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/testing/state-testing-overview/washington-kindergarten-inventory-developing-skills-wakids>

Bellevue Kinderling: Developmental Screenings, School Readiness: <https://kinderling.org>

Family Support Self Assessment: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CENTER-BASED-EARLY-CARE-AND-EDUCATION-PROGRAM-SELF-ASSESSMENT.pdf>

Montessori, Waldorf & Reggio-Emilia

Differences Infographic

<https://visual.ly/community/Infographics/animals/big-three-comparing-montessori-waldorf-and-reggio-emilia-learning>

Comparing All Three

<https://theconversation.com/montessori-steiner-or-reggio-emilia-which-childcare-philosophy-is-best-for-your-family-131457>

Play-based Learning

Play-Based Learning <https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/pubs/this-is-play-chap-1-excerpt.pdf>

Natural Start, The Importance of Nature Play <https://naturalstart.org/feature-stories/parent's-guide-nature-play>

Outdoor Play

National Association of Education of Young Children

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/may2019/outdoor-play-is-essential>

Harvard Health

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/6-reasons-children-need-to-play-outside-2018052213880>

Process Art

How Process Focused Art Experiences Support Preschoolers-NAEYC

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/feb2014/process-art-experiences>

Open-Ended Questions for Little Artists

<https://eatplaypaint.com/2021/09/18/lets-talk-about-art/>

What is Process Art?

<https://tinkerlab.com/what-is-process-art-for-kids>

Eat, Play, Paint Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/eat.play.paint>

Positive Discipline

Sproutable Website

<https://www.besproutable.com>

Sproutable YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoMEvSs7xeQ50cpdJty76_Q

Big Little Feelings

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BigLittleFeelings>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/biglittlefeelings/>

Mr. Chazz

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/mrchazz/>