



# The Growing Tree Playcare and Preschool 2022 Parent Handbook

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## 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, graduating from MIHS, and joining the same sorority at Washington State University, here we are as “Daycare Ladies”! Our love for children has only grown over the years. The two of us had such a wonderful experience growing up in a nurturing play-based environment; we only hope to create the same impact on your child by being their home away from home! We are passionate about providing a caring and loving environment for your child to learn and grow.

We hope that you will become an active part of your child’s school life and we encourage families to join us for our many school wide functions throughout the year. At The Growing Tree we strive to build a community feel by providing opportunities for families to get to know their child’s teachers, friends, and other GT families!

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

Again, 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 a licensed family home childcare facility, through the Department of Children, Youth & Families. We are licensed for twelve children from 6 weeks to 12 years old. We have all completed the State’s training requirements, background checks, are current in CPR and first aid, have food handlers certifications, over 20 hours of annual continuing education, and have over 15 years of childcare experience. Continuing our education is very important to us, and we frequently attend conferences and take early childhood education courses.

Jessica has a degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Child Development from Washington State University. She previously taught preschool at Aldersgate Christian

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Preschool, and nannied for multiple families.

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 nannied. Alli and her husband, Teddy, welcomed their first child into the world in 2019 and she now attends 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. She decided to make the break from the fashion industry and follow her passion for teaching. It feels like she has been with us since day one and makes a wonderful addition to our team.

Ms. Katie joined our teaching team in the summer of 2019 when she moved to the PNW from California. She is completing her Early Childhood Education degree this year and previously taught at a farm school in the Bay Area.

Ms. Faith joined our team when Alli was on maternity leave and turns out, having 5 teachers on staff is better than 4! Faith has a background in nannying and decided to switch into Education.

The state requires a 1:6 teacher to child ratio, but we find 1:4 or even 1:3 is much better! We have trained substitute teachers readily on call if needed and the day will proceed as usual.

You will always have access to our records of training and development. If you would like to know about any parenting development classes feel free to ask!

## Philosophy

At The Growing Tree we believe in the education of the whole child. The power of play should never be underestimated. Learning through play gives children the opportunity to take ownership of their learning. While we do provide many structured learning activities, children are also encouraged to discover the world through their own eyes. We believe that socialization is key to development. Using imagination and dramatic play will enhance every child's experience of childhood! We believe that inspiring children to create promotes self-esteem and imagination

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.

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- 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.

## The Benefits of Home Daycare

There are many immediate and long-term benefits to giving your child a home daycare experience. The Growing Tree is not just a daycare; it is our home. We pride ourselves in being the opposite of an institution. Our home is also a home to your child.

With a maximum of twelve children and three-four staff members, your child will get the very best individualized care. They are guaranteed to have tons 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. Another wonderful benefit is that the children are not grouped by age. Younger children will learn from older children. The older children will learn empathy and compassion through the infants. The mixed age group offers more of a family feel and will teach children to be comfortable and how to interact with children of other ages.

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.

## Mixed-Age Groups

At Growing Tree, for the majority of the day, we do not separate children into classrooms based on age or ability. Our classes are mixed with children 6 weeks to 5 years old. 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! Some daily activities will be divided into smaller groups based on interests. These activities that may include more structure and may not be developmentally appropriate for younger children. Creating a close-knit family and community environment is very important to us at The Growing Tree, and a mixed-age group setting is a factor we feel sets us apart from the rest.

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## 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 Playcare prepares children not only to become students who will work with others cooperatively and approach learning with joy, but also happier people who will not lose their love of play!

Our school is open to all children and does not discriminate against an individual because of his or her race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.

The Growing Tree values each person's beliefs and right to be what they want. We invite all families to feel comfortable and confident in expressing themselves. We believe in an active and positive approach to embracing culture and diversity. Our school is accepting of all people regardless of their ability, age, beliefs, economic status, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, perspective, race, color, religion, sexual orientations, gender identity, values, or physical, mental, or sensory disability.

## 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.

## Hours of Operation

The Growing Tree opens at **7:00am** and closes at **5:30pm**. We ask for your compliance for our hours of operation since we are a family home daycare and have lives outside of The Growing Tree!

Our **full day** program is up to 10 hours from **7:00am-5:30pm**. Our **morning half-day** is

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from **7:00am-12:00pm**. Our **afternoon half-day** is from **12:30pm-5:30pm**.

Your child can be dropped off any time after their registered start time and picked up any time before their scheduled pick-up time. Late fees will be strictly assessed.

## Daily Schedule

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 vibe of the day.

- **7:00 am:** Welcome! Free play
- 8:00 am: Small group, art, stories
- 9:00 am: **Breakfast** often with Science experiments, art, stories, songs (8:15 on Weds)
- 9:45 am-11:15: Morning Circle, Music, Creative movement, Sharing, Story, Art, and Outside Play (Order and participation may vary)
- **11:15 am: Lunch** often with Science experiments, art, stories, songs
- **12:00 pm: ½ day pick up and free play**
- **12:30pm: ½ day drop off**
- **1:00 pm: Rest time/Nap/**Quiet activities (Puzzles, coloring, books, music)
- 3:30 pm: **Snack** often with Science experiments, art, stories, songs
- 4:00-5:30 pm: Story/ Art, Free Play, and Outside Play (May vary on the day)
- **5:30 pm: Pick up**

\*Children in diapers will be changed at least every two hours

## Curriculum & The Year at a Glance

Throughout the year, we have designed a seasonal continuum of themes that we base our planning and activities around. The length of each theme is based on the children's interest. Alphabet, numbers, shapes, senses and colors will be incorporated in lessons all year round. Social- emotional development is embedded throughout each and every day!

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://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

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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](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\\_renenteringkindergarten-english.pdf](https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/wakids/pubdocs/characteristicsofchild_renenteringkindergarten-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 in 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 Encounter's bring a petting zoo to Treehouse as we kick off our farm studies!

**October:** Acorns, pumpkins, leaves, oh my! 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, and 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 Farm at Swan's Trail wraps up everything we have been learning about thus far. Families gather together to pet farm animals, pick pumpkins, go on a hay ride, 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 through November as we discuss the meaning of Thanksgiving and talk about what we're grateful for. Our Choose Kind theme returns, inspired by the book *We Are All Wonders*. In November, we also overlap 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.

Families are encouraged to talk about what they are grateful for at home to continue our school discussion.

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**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 our friends at Child Haven. Child Haven is a local nonprofit that helps families who are victims of domestic violence, while educating parents on how to break the cycle of abuse.

**January:** Pajamuary, 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, especially between Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Valentine's 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:** In 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 have a special visit from the local Fire and Police Department!

**March:** Spring is an exciting season at Treehouse with the many changes in nature. We start our month off 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 such as blossoms on cherry trees, blooming tulips, and fluttering butterflies. We watch our caterpillars transform into beautiful butterflies and our seeds sprout into flowers first hand.

Oxbow Farms 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 Treehouse for our Spring Art Show which displays the brilliant and colorful masterpieces of our little artists!

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**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 chicks and 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 “chicksit” and take home a duck or chick 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 Encounter’s Australian Animals, as well as a weekend fieldtrip to the zoo!

**June:** We transition from wild animals to ocean animals in the beginning of June! 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 The Treehouse! 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 Treehouse, especially if the process is enjoyed!

- Hand-eye coordination and small muscle manipulation are developed through the children’s play, crafts- cutting, coloring, puzzles, stringing, and other such activities.
- Gross motor activities take place outside, during physical games, music, dramatic play, and in our indoor large movement activity area.

## Calendar/ Holidays

Since we are a small business without backup employees, we have scheduled in holiday vacation time. 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. The Growing Tree follows the Bellevue School District calendar and will be closed the following dates\*:

### 2022

- May 26th-27th- Professional Development Days
- May 30th - Memorial Day Observed
- June 20<sup>th</sup>- 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
- May 25th-26th- Professional Development Day
- May 29th - Memorial Day Observed
- June 19<sup>th</sup>- 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

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## Weather Policy

We follow the Bellevue School District 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 (12:30pm) or closures. If there is a late start announcement, both The Treehouse and Growing Tree will open for the afternoon program only at 12:30pm.** You can find more information on school closures on King5.com.

**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.

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. We have very limited space with only 18 children at a time. Part time schedules open up more frequently than full time schedules. Families that can start with part-time openings have priority to add time when/if it opens up. We hold off on giving tours until we know of any spaces opening up. Once a family tours, they can send in an application.

Once we have an opening, current families will be notified if they would like to add or change days. After that applications are reviewed and applicants are notified about an opening. Trial days or drop-in days are required in the beginning to determine if it is a good fit for the child and family, along with a completed registration form and updated health/vaccination records. Once a space is given to a family there is an annual \$180 Supply and Registration Fee to secure the space.

We have a two week notice policy when disenrolling a child from the program, however more notice the better. The two weeks will be paid in full regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance.

## Fees and Registration

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

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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.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN YOUR FEES AND TUITION

- Unconditional love and nurturing of your child
- Quality, educated, and experienced teachers and caregivers
- Dependability
- Small family atmosphere that promises one on one attention vs. a large center environment
- Nutritious meals and snacks made fresh at each meal
- Specialists including Dizzy's Tumble Bus, Music, and Creative Movement
- Daily communication about your child's day
- Weekly class newsletters, monthly progress reports, and twice-yearly developmental reports
- Preschool Program that begins when your child is 2.5 years old
- All arts and crafts supplies
- Toys, games, puzzles, books, music supplies, swing set and outdoor toys
- Cribs, mats, blankets, pillows, bibs, cups, plates, bowls, silverware
- Potty training assistance and wipes
- First Aid supplies
- All supplies needed for our holiday, birthday or other fun themed events that we have throughout the year
- Training for provider: CPR/First Aid certification, child development classes/conferences, monthly childcare association training meetings, continual STARS trainings, etc.
- Registration costs, Procure Connect account, and bookkeeping
- Utilities: electricity, heat, air conditioning, water, garbage, gas, etc.
- Furniture: wear and tear, cleaning, replacing, repairing, etc.
- The list goes on.....

## 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. Unless it is for a drop-in, we do not charge by the hour, so if your child leaves earlier than your registered time, you will still pay the whole 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 bill will be emailed out **one week** prior to the end of the month. Any late fees or extended time will be added on to the next month's bill.

Payments can be made through checks, cash, online through Procure Connect. Procure

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Connect charges fees for credit card use, so we recommend using routing numbers or debit cards if paying electronically. Checks can be mailed to The Growing Tree, 11415 NE 21<sup>st</sup> ST, Bellevue, 98004.

## Monthly Fees

### 6 Weeks- 6 Years Old

-Full day: Up to 10 hours per day (7am-5:30pm)

-Half day: Up to 5 hours per day (7am-12pm or 12:30pm-5:30pm)

|          | 5 Days | 4.5 Days | 4 Days | 3.5 Days | 3 Days | 2.5 Days | 2 Days | 1.5 Days | 1 Day |
|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|-------|
| Full Day | \$2730 | \$2560   | \$2400 | \$2145   | \$1900 | \$1640   | \$1365 | \$1000   | \$630 |
| Half Day | \$1785 |          | \$1560 |          | \$1100 |          | \$685  |          | \$345 |

\*Due to limited space The Growing Tree does not offer a sibling discount

### 2.5-6 years old with 4 hours of preschool

-Full day: Up to 9 hours per day (7am-4:30pm or 8:30am-5:30pm)

|          | 5 days | 4 days | 3 days | 2 days | 1 day |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Full Day | \$2520 | \$2205 | \$1765 | \$1260 | 575   |

\*Half day: Up to 4 hours per day see Treehouse rates

Monthly tuition rates increase 5% for each family annually in September as our rent increases.

## Absence

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, the 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 trade missed days, but additional drop-in days may be added if space is available.

## Illness Policy

It is not unusual when a child starts in any type of group play or childcare, that he/she may seem 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.

We cannot allow a sick child to attend The Growing Tree. **If your child has an unexplained rash, a fever of 100F or over, excessive cold/cough, vomiting, diarrhea, lice, ringworm, scabies, discharge from eyes/ears or a communicable disease**

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**(chickenpox, conjunctivitis, influenza, etc.) or your child seems severely ill including lethargy, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or a significant change in behavior or activity level, they must remain home for at least 24 hours after being symptom-free. It is everyone's responsibility to do everything possible to prevent contagious infections from spreading to the other children in our care.**

If your 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 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 us becoming ill and us 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. We will then notify all the families of the children who to have been exposed. We may report such conditions to the health department if needed. 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.

## 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 updated records after your child has any new vaccinations. These records will be completely confidential and stored in your child's file. 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](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/el-license/348-013_CertificateImmunizationStatusForm.pdf)

## Example of Menu/ Nutrition

At The Growing Tree we believe in healthy growing foods! We serve quality organic and/or fresh foods at all meals. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack will all be provided. If your child has allergies or sensitivities to certain food, feel free to bring their own snacks and meals with their name clearly labeled on it. All teachers follow Washington State safe food handling practices and hold current food handlers permits.

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Due to parent's preference and doctor recommendations, we ask that you provide your own infant formula. Breast milk and infant formula also needs to be clearly labeled and handed to us in the morning. We will follow your infants feeding schedule and begin feeding baby food/ solids when notified.

Whenever possible, kids are invited to help prepare snacks and or lunches.

Example of a weekly menu of snacks and meals:

|           | Monday                              | Tuesday                            | Wednesday                        | Thursday                                 | Friday                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Breakfast | Oatmeal with fresh berries          | Veggie and cheese omelet           | Fruit Salad with turkey sausages | Whole grain mini bagel with cream cheese | Yogurt parfait                             |
| Lunch     | Turkey and cheese wrap with avocado | Chicken, mozzarella, tomato Panini | Whole grain pasta with veggies   | Organic chicken nuggets and veggies      | Peanut butter or honey and banana sandwich |
| Snack     | Carrots with ranch dip              | Bananas and Yogurt                 | Smoothies and cheese             | Applesauce and graham crackers           | Cheese and whole grain crackers            |

## Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays are a special time in a child's life and they deserve a celebration! We encourage parents to bring a treat or activity to celebrate, but it's in no way required! Please make sure there is enough for every child and discuss plans/ schedule it 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.

## Allergies

We know how common allergies are and we will do everything we can to accommodate your child's needs. Please provide any special foods your child needs and clearly label them. If your child has an allergy, please submit a written care plan from you and your child's health care provider including foods that must not be consumed and steps to take in case of an unintended allergic reaction, foods that may be substituted for allergic foods and a specific treatment plan to follow in response to an allergic reaction. This plan should

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include the names of all medications to be administered, directions for how to administer the medication, dosage amounts and a description of allergic reactions and symptoms associated with your child's particular allergies. Please provide and special foods your child needs and clearly label them.

## 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 his/her 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...written permission from your child's doctor/pediatrician/dentist must be obtained prior to administering any medication, including over-the-counter medicines. We must also have written permission from you to administer medications. Prescription medication must be brought in its pharmacy container, appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or person with prescriptive authority. It must also note the dosing/administering directions. Medications will always be stored out of reach of children and will only be given to the child whose name is on the labeled medication. A medication given while in care will be clearly documented. Please note: Amber teething necklaces are considered non-prescription medication and are prohibited in early learning facilities.

## Drop-in Openings

Depending on capacity, we offer a drop-in program for \$20.00 an hour, \$90 for the full half day (AM or PM), and \$180 for the whole full day. If you will just be using the drop-in openings and your child is not a regular student of ours, you will still need to fill out an enrollment form before your child starts. If you are interested in being notified of an open space, we will contact you as soon as we are aware of an opening. Our drop-in time will be a minimum of 2 hours, just enough time to run a few errands or get in a workout! If you turn down a drop-in offer, we will contact another parent.

## Arrival and Dismissal

An iPad is used to sign in and out. **It is extremely important to sign this every time you pick up and drop off your child.** There will also be a space for you 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), we need a copy of their drivers license and written parent permission before hand. Your child's safety and whereabouts is extremely important to us.

That being said, you may pick up and drop off your child at any point throughout our hours

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_



of operation. In order to keep the drop off process running smoothly, we do ask that you be brief. For many children, the longer their parents linger, the harder the separation is. We do have an open door policy and if you would like to come play with your child during the day please make sure it is not during the scheduled rest time (1pm-3pm).

## Early/Late Policy

As much as we love children, we need our own down time to regroup! Please respect our time. Also, we must be very careful not to exceed our capacity at any point in the day. **Our early and late fee 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 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, until tuition is paid.** We rely on tuition to keep our daycare running!

## What Clothing and Supplies to Bring

Kids will be kids! Please provide **at least 3 extra changes of clothes** for your child that we will keep in their cubby. Always layer, layer, layer! With Seattle's spontaneous weather, your child may need a coat and a short sleeve shirt in the same day. Better safe than sorry when it comes to warmth. **We highly recommend getting a pair of rain pants to keep at school.**

During the summer, please pack sunscreen and any other items they need to be comfortable. In the colder months, please bring a hat, scarf, mittens etc.

We do ask that you bring diapers, pull-ups, and any diaper cream needed for your young child. **We will provide baby wipes.** Please label and bring personal bottles, pacifiers, formulas, breast milk and any other key items that your child will need.

Children can bring a comfort blanket and/or stuffed animal for rest time. We also recommend bringing a blanket to leave at The Growing Tree just in case.

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!

In case of emergency, we have a backpack with the appropriate supplies for all children. However, if you would like to supply your own materials, or any extra items (family pictures, blanket, special note, etc), please bring them in a small backpack. This backpack

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

will belong to your child and will be given back to you when they go to kindergarten or leave our care.

## Communication

Communication is an extremely important part of our program. We value being a second home for your child and 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 directly and privately can be scheduled or can be addressed over email or a phone conversation.** We text parents throughout the day with small updates, pictures, and questions regarding their child. Emails are best for scheduling and tuition questions so that they can be answered accurately and can be confirmed.

Growing Tree updates regarding curriculum, activities, and upcoming events/news will be communicated through our private family Facebook Page (Follow Growing Tree Family Page), along with helpful parent resources and home extensions.

Bi-monthly 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 your child's 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.

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 morning of so we can let the child know it is just a visit, not pick up.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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! We post these photos on our private Growing Tree Family Page on Facebook. 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.

## 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 care takers 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

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

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. Under no circumstance will your child be struck, yanked, shaken, sworn at, belittled or otherwise made to feel threatened.

At The Growing Tree we believe in positive reinforcement, immediate and consistent consequences, time to step out of the situation, and re-direction. 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 manor. Children who are too young to understand a problem will be redirected to a different activity.

## 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.

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.

## 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,

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

before and after eating, after playing outside, and after having contact with the dogs. Throughout playtime, we frequently offer the children The Honest Company hand sanitizer (magic soap) as an additional germ buster!

## Infant Care

When caring for an infant they will **always** be supervised. During naptime they will be placed on their back with their arms free to sleep, and we will be in hearing and visual distance. Infants will have supervised tummy time at least 3 times a day! Breast milk will be kept frozen for up to two weeks then will be thrown away. Bottles will be warmed up in water and when you have chosen to stop breast-feeding your baby, we will always provide pasteurized whole milk for the ages of 12 months to 24 months. Left over solid food will be thrown out that same day. Diapers will always be checked and changed every 2 hours if needed.

## Potty Training

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. 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.

## Nap/Rest time

Between 1:00 and 3:00 in the afternoon we have a set naptime. If children are beginning to outgrow naps, we still require a rest time, but they are free to play quietly. Infants will of course follow their own sleep schedule and will be placed on their back, with no blanket or extra items. We will frequently (every 5-15 minutes) check on the children while napping.

## 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 the Dizzy's Tumble Bus that come visit us. These specialists are included in tuition and do not have to be signed up for in advance if it is on a day your child regularly attends. Children are given the option to participate but never forced to partake in any activity if they do not want to.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

## Screen Time Policy

We will occasionally use videos to enhance our curriculum. There are many educational shows and movies that help children learn about a topic! If used, we will limit this time to 30 minutes.

## Pet Policy

Not only do we love kiddos, we are HUGE animal lovers! Occasionally Ms. Jessi brings her two chihuahuas to work. The dogs will usually be in areas of the house that are not used by the children, but on occasion they will come out to play! If your child is allergic to dogs we will keep them away and be sure to wash hands very often. All children will wash their hands after playing with the dogs. Exposing your child to animals adds to our homey environment and helps children learn responsibility and compassion towards animals. We think dogs and children are the two best things in life!

## Water Activities

During warmer weather months, we often incorporate water play 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. During water activities, a teacher will always have one-to-one ratio with infants participating in water play, and have continuous hold on infants, nonambulatory toddlers, and children with special needs as required. Toddlers will be within arms reach when in water.

## Parental Termination Policy

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating. Parents are required to give **two weeks** written notice when they decide to terminate childcare. **The two weeks 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 amount owed. All accounts turned over to collections will have a \$15 per day late fee plus 35% collections fee added to amount due.

## Provider Termination Policy

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after two weeks, without any sign of progression**
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property**
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- 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 child care resources, such as ChildCare Aware 1-800-446-1114.

**In the event that we, the provider, decide to terminate the child care relationship due to repeated contract violations, by the parent or legal guardian, we reserve the legal right to terminate the child care relationship without notice. To avoid the unfortunate situation from occurring, parents and legal guardians are required to thoroughly read the entire child care contract. Parents and legal guardians are required to ask for a detailed explanation of any child care 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, it's just a fact of life. 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 parent/guardian will be notified at pick up time as to what happened. For more severe injuries, we will call a parent/guardian, or if needed 911 and then notify the parents/guardians. Should the child need to be transported, we will relay the parents/guardians choice of hospital as indicated by intake records. Should we be unable to contact a parent/guardian we will call the person or persons listed on your emergency form. We 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

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

parents/guardians immediately. We will then also check outdoors and neighboring homes. In case of an accidental poisoning we will call the poison control center, determine what the child got into, follow the poison center's recommendations, call 911 if needed and alert one of the parents/guardians of the incident.

In case of fire alarm or the need to evacuate, we will bring the children our preschool, The Treehouse Playcare & Preschool at 11511 NE 21<sup>st</sup> ST. We have an evacuation route posted in the house, along with an emergency backpack containing children's information and first aid. Parents will be notified whether or not their child needs to be picked up (not so if it turns out to be a 'false alarm'). We will do fire drills randomly 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). We will evacuate quickly after to the driveway, where we will notify parents for pick up.

In the event of a largescale natural disaster, we are prepared to safely keep children overnight at school for up to 2 weeks if needed. We have emergency supplies, disaster kits, water, and extra food stored in our garage. When a child starts daycare, we ask that families bring a Disaster Kit to keep at school (and leave when child disenrolls). 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. Should there be a neighborhood lockdown, we will notify all parents/guardians by 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.

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 it becomes apparent that the child is being harmed, we are required by state law to report such cases. You also have the right to report any suspicions or incidents that you observe regarding your child or any other child in our child care home.

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_



## Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol is not allowed to be used in a childcare home during the hours of operation. Smoking or vaping will not be allowed on the premises either. Parents/guardians are not 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.

## Parent Resources

Early Learning Development Guidelines:

[https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/EL\\_0015.pdf](https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/EL_0015.pdf)

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>

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 Kindering: Developmental Screenings, School Readiness: <https://kindering.org>

Sproutable: One of our favorite resources with advice on everything from biting/hitting to mindfulness and being thankful! : <https://www.besproutable.com>

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

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