

YMCA Learning Tree Preschool Family Handbook



LearningTreePreschool

www.tcfymca.org/learningtree

TRI-CITIES FAMILY YMCA

1 Y Drive Grand Haven, MI 49417
616.842.7051 ext. 242



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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PHILOSOPHY & GOALS

The main focus of the Learning Tree program is to provide positive and developmentally age-appropriate experiences to help young children grow. We strive to create an environment where your child will be stimulated to learn in many different developmental areas including social/emotional, cognitive, physical, and language.

CURRICULUM

Learning Tree Preschool utilizes The Creative Curriculum® (Preschool and Infants & Toddlers) in its classrooms. This curriculum is a comprehensive, research based, and nationally recognized curriculum that emphasizes effective teaching as the primary tool in helping children achieve learning outcomes. This supportive curriculum offers developmentally appropriate programs that support active learning and promote children's progress in all developmental areas.

The philosophy of the curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. The Creative Curriculum® is built on theories of development in early childhood, that all children learn through active exploration of their environment and therefore the environment plays a critical role in learning. The goal of the curriculum is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive, and enthusiastic learners by actively exploring their environment.

The curriculum identifies objectives and goals in all areas of development: Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Physical, and Language. The planned activities for the children, the organization of the environment, the selection of toys and materials, the daily schedule, and daily interactions with the children, are all designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the curriculum and give your child a successful early learning experience. Through assessment of the objectives and goals for each individual child, our teachers are able to utilize and implement a wide range of teaching strategies- from child-initiated learning to teacher-directed approaches- to best respond to each child's learning style, strengths, and interests.

The teaching staff supports the curriculum by carefully designing the environment using eleven different interest areas or centers:

- Blocks
- Dramatic Play & House Corner
- Table Toys & Games (Manipulatives)
- Art
- Library
- Science & Discovery
- Sand and Water
- Music & Movement
- Cooking
- Technology
- Outdoors

The richer the environments, the more concrete opportunities there are for children to learn by interacting with materials and people. The teacher's role is to create an environment that invites

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children to observe, to be active, to make choices, and to experiment. Additionally, writing and math opportunities are incorporated into each interest area.

ASSESSMENT

Learning Tree Preschool promotes authentic assessment in the natural learning environment of the child. Assessment measures need to be developmentally appropriate and educationally significant. Authentic assessments rely primarily on teacher-child interactions, teacher observations, work sampling, and portfolios. The evidence gathered is used to understand and improve student learning and outcomes. Additionally, multiple sources of evidence are gathered over time to develop a holistic picture of each individual child. There are a variety of assessment tools that we utilize. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire® is a developmental screening tool used in cooperation with families and will be completed once in the fall and then again in the spring. Information gathered from these screenings will be shared and evaluated with the family during conferences. When necessary, professional staff will work with families and local agencies in seeking additional support and resources for children and families.

In addition to a summary of the benchmarks achieved by each individual child through the creative curriculum, we will also keep a portfolio of each child's work samples and achievements to share during family conferences. Conferences are a special time to celebrate your child and discuss their growth, strengths, and achievements. This is also a time for teachers and families to work together to discuss additional supports that may be needed for individual children to promote success. Conferences will be conducted twice during the school year in the fall and spring.

GREAT START READINESS PRESCHOOL



Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is funded by the Michigan Department of Education and is overseen by the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District. Learning Tree Preschool is proud to provide the Great Start Readiness Program to children four years old on or before September 1st who meet qualifying factors that *may* put them at risk for low educational attainment in Kindergarten and beyond. The program provides high quality preschool for children enrolled in the program.

GSRP Philosophy: The goal of the GSRP program is to provide every preschooler with the best educational opportunities through child-centered, hands-on curriculum set in a rich learning environment.

Young children learn to the best of their ability when:

- A safe, healthy, nurturing classroom environment is provided
- Strong teacher-child relationships in combination with strong family-teacher relationships in which all are valued are developed
- Many opportunities are provided for play and learning through play experiences
- Families are involved and work with professional staff to help children grow
- The activities are geared toward children's current skills and interests

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Decisions are made from a child-centered focus which includes looking at the early childhood standards of quality preschool, the curriculum, assessment information, feedback from parents and the diverse social, economic, cultural and family needs that exist within the classroom.

GSRP Enrollment: Learning Tree Preschool admits children without regard to race, color, nationality, or religious background. Age requirements and qualifying factors must be met to be eligible for admittance to the GSRP program. All interested applicants must be a resident of Ottawa County in order to be considered for participation in GSRP at Learning Tree Preschool. Children must be four years old on or before September 1st of the school year and meet risk factors identified by the Michigan Department of Education. These risk factors include:

- Extremely low income (counts as two factors)
- Low income
- Diagnosed disability or identified developmental delay
- Severe or challenging behavior
- Primary home language other than English
- Parent/guardian with low educational attainment
- Abuse/neglect of child or parent
- Environmental risk such as: parental loss, sibling issues, teen parent, homeless or non-stable housing, high risk neighborhood or prenatal or postnatal exposure to toxic substances known to cause learning or developmental delays.

GSRP Tuition: The Great Start Readiness Program offers tuition free preschool to families that qualify based on their income. Families that are at or below 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) qualify for the program. Families that have an income above 250% of the FPL may still qualify for the program based on other risk factors. When a family’s income is above 250% of the FPL, they are required to pay tuition based upon an OAISD district-wide common sliding fee scale. The current sliding scale for the 2016-2017 school year is as follows:

Program:	250% of FPL and Below:	251-300% of FPL:	301-350% Of FPL:	351% of FPL and Above:
Part Day Annual	No tuition may be charged.	\$25/per child	\$50/per child	\$100/per child
Minimum number of other risk factors required:	0	1	2	3

EXEMPTIONS:

- 1) GSRP children from over income families who are enrolled and who also have an IEP must not be charged tuition.
- 2) Scholarships paid with local funds may be permitted to satisfy child’s sliding scale fee obligation.

GSRP Classroom Requirements: Learning Tree Preschool offers a part-day program for GSRP. The GSRP classroom will meet a minimum of three hours each day, for at least four days per week. A

1:8 adult/child ratio will be maintained at all times. The class size will not exceed 18 students. If enrollment goes beyond 16 students, a third teacher will be added to the classroom.

GSRP Family Involvement and Engagement: Children who are successful in school have many healthy interconnections between family, school, and community. Parent involvement in the learning process strengthens learning at home and is directly linked back to positive child outcomes at school. Throughout the school year, both formal and informal communication and interaction between home and school will occur. Examples of formal communication between home and school include:

- Two home visits per school year. GSRP teachers will visit the family and student in their home.
- Two parent teacher conferences per school year, fall and spring, to discuss the student's progress and learning goals.

Informal communication can also strengthen the connections between home and school. Examples of informal communication that will occur throughout the school year include:

- Conversations during drop-off and pick-up times
- Notes
- Telephone conversations
- Electronic communications.

GSRP Parent Notice of Program Measurement: Learning Tree Preschool is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers, etc.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law. Questions? Contact: mde-gsrp@michigan.gov or 517-373-8483 or MDE, Office of Great Start, 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909.

LICENSING

The Tri-Cities Family YMCA Learning Tree Preschool is licensed by the Michigan Department of Human Services: Office of Children and Adult Licensing. Licensed centers are required to follow the "Licensing Rules for Childcare Centers". A copy of these rules is available in all classrooms and in the director's office. Also in the director's office is the center's licensing notebook. This notebook is available for review by families during hours of operation. Included in this licensing notebook is documentation of the renewal/interim inspection reports, as well as, any documentation on special investigations. Childcare center licenses are granted for two years and require a full licensing inspection to renew. The licensing consultant assigned to the childcare center may conduct unannounced visits to the center to ensure all licensing rules are being. In addition, the licensing consultant must approve any changes such as new classrooms or transportation and investigate

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any incidents reported by staff, parents, children or local authorities. Learning Tree Preschool is also inspected by and must meet regulations set in place by the Department of Environmental Health and Fire Safety.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Below is a sample schedule of a typical day in your child's preschool classroom. Schedule will vary depending on the age of the children, teacher and child preferences and class time duration. Specific classroom schedules are displayed in classrooms for both children and adults to see.

- **Arrival/Greeting Time:** Children enter the classroom at their own pace. Parents/guardians are encouraged to stay until children are ready for them to leave. Children have choices about whether to spend time with books or interact with adults and one another. Once all children have arrived, adults share the daily announcements.
- **Large-Group Time/Music and Movement:** All adults and children participate in activities planned around children's interests, developmental levels, music and movement, cooperative play and projects, and events meaningful to children.
- **Small Group Time:** An adult-initiated learning experience based on children's interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials, and talk about what they are doing. Individual children explore and use the same set of materials in their own way.
- **Planning Time:** Through small group experiences, children indicate their plans to adults in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Adults use a range of strategies to support children's planning (e.g., props, area signs, tape recorders, song) planning individually, in pairs, and in small groups.
- **Work Time:** Children always initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Work Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.
- **Cleanup Time:** Children and adults clean up together, keeping the spirit of play and problem solving alive. Children make many choices during clean up time. Adults accept children's level of involvement and skill while supporting their learning.
- **Recall Time:** Gathered in small group settings, children choose Work Time experiences to reflect on, talk about, and exhibit. Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow the children's lead and encourage children to share (e.g., individual props such as puppets, telephones, group games using a hula hoop, ball or spinner, re-enacting, drawing, showing and describing a structure or painting, etc.). Adults are unhurried in their approach and may complete Recall Time with four or five children each day.
- **Snack:** Family-Style meals support children doing things for themselves (e.g., serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, and wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own snack space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.
- **Outside Time/Dismissal:** Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment much as they do during Work Time indoors. Adults supervise children

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for safety and also join in their outdoor play, supporting children's initiatives and problem solving.

APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

Preschool is a busy place and we want your child to feel free to explore and create. Our activities may involve materials that can stain or ruin clothing. We do have "paint" shirts available, but accidents do happen. **It is a good idea to send a change of clothes (including underwear and socks) to school with your child's name clearly marked on them.** Please place these items in a re-sealable plastic bag. It is important to have your child comfortable and ready for anything.

As part of the Learning Tree program, your child will have opportunities each day for age appropriate gym activities and outdoor time. Please understand that your child will be running, jumping, crawling through tunnels and doing other fun things that make it important to wear **comfortable clothing and soft non-marking soled shoes.**

We do also go outside for activities, so please dress for the weather, even in the winter. Studies have indicated that children who are taken outdoors, even during cold weather for short periods of time, have fewer incidences of respiratory illnesses. Infectious disease organisms are less concentrated in outdoor air than indoor air. Additionally, exposing the skin to sunlight promotes the production of vitamin D that growing children require. When outdoors, children breathe fresh air, develop their muscles (both gross and fine motor muscles), learn and practice increasingly difficult skills, share and cooperate with other children, and get hands-on experiences with some basic scientific principles. It is recommended that your child:

- Wear child-safe sunscreen all year round, even in winter
- Dresses appropriately for activities: long-sleeved and long-legged items protect from sunburn; full jacket, snowsuit, mittens, scarf, hat, boots for snow play; etc...
- **All clothing (boots, hats, mittens, coats, etc.) should be clearly marked with his/her name on them.**

Children will not be permitted to go outside when the "Feels Like" temperature is under 10 °F or above 100 °F. The "Feels Like" temperature takes into consideration the wind chill or heat index and is a better measure of the weather conditions for outdoor play.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

It is in the child's best interest to leave personal belongings at home. We **cannot** be held responsible for any personal belongings should they be lost or broken at the Learning Tree. Children in our toddler classrooms (Twos and Two/Threes Combo Classrooms) may bring a personal item of comfort with them to preschool (blanket, stuffed animal, etc.). Pacifiers in the classroom are discouraged as these items can increase the spread of germs between children.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Learning Tree Preschool is committed to respecting each child and family's culture and diverse needs. We recognize that culture influences every aspect of a child's development and is reflected

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in each family's childrearing beliefs and practices. It is important to support and preserve the child's home language, faith/beliefs, and cultural traditions in the classroom.

Some of the ways the program can carry out this philosophy depending on the families' individual needs are:

- Families are treated with respect and sensitivity.
- Families' financial limitations are respected when planning for activities.
- Information is learned about families' culture, faith/beliefs, and cultural traditions at enrollment.
- Families are encouraged to be actively involved in what their children are doing in our program through volunteering and our "open-door" policy.
- Families' communication preferences are honored (i.e. verbal, written, phone, email, etc.).
- English Language Learner families are encouraged and assisted in becoming knowledgeable about the cognitive value for children knowing more than one language, and are provided with strategies to support, maintain, and preserve home-languages.

All Learning Tree Preschool staff will complete three annual training hours in Special Needs and/or Cultural Diversity.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Parents and caregivers are always welcome to visit the classroom at any time with or without notice. We encourage you to get involved with your child's preschool experience. Research has shown that parental involvement is a key factor in determining a child's success at school. Primarily, children need to feel that their parents take an interest in their activities and efforts. We realize everyone has different schedules and your level of involvement may take on different forms; from cutting projects at home, making play dough, or volunteering your time with us by helping in the classroom on a rotational basis. For the parents/caregivers that can volunteer in the classrooms, we will have a monthly sign-up sheet posted on your child's classroom bulletin board.

Parents and caregivers are also invited to attend our monthly family advisory board (FAB) meetings. This is an additional opportunity for families to participate in fundraising activities and planning, act as decision makers with regard to the preschool program, and to strengthen connections between home and school.

COURT ORDERS & CUSTODY

State law maintains that both parents have access to their child unless there are legal documents which define the restrictions. In situations involving child custody disputes or restraining orders, a copy of the court order **MUST** be in the child's file. We cannot prohibit contact with either parent **without a current court order.**

The enrolling parent or legal guardian will be asked to prove that his or her instructions on releasing the child from the program are in accordance with the law and not in violation of the other parent's or legal guardian's rights. The Learning Tree will ask for a copy of custody arrangements to be part of the child's file. If either parent is prohibited from picking up the child, prohibited from volunteering in the classroom or being on school property, a court order is required to be part of the child's file.

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The Learning Tree will abide by all legally served court orders. We will communicate to the parent or legal guardian who enrolled the child when a court order has been served to us.

We depend on parents to keep us informed on the issues of custody. Communication between the custodial parent(s) and the preschool director is vital.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All Learning Tree professional staff will respect families', children's and colleague's privacy. All information and documentation necessary for enrollment will only be shared with the lead teacher, associate teacher, and preschool director. For GSRP classrooms, student files will be reviewed by the OAISD Early Childhood Specialist. All student files and documentation is stored outside the classroom in a locked location. All child/family information and records, private conversations with families, and classroom observational notes are considered confidential and will not be shared with any outside parties.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

If you arrive early, please plan to wait in the hallway until our doors open 5 minutes prior to your class start time. This policy allows our instructors undistracted time to prepare the room as well as allows friends to come in together.

It is helpful to establish a "drop off" plan to make your child feel more comfortable about your departure. Some suggestions include; parent says goodbye after child hangs up backpack or maybe one last special kiss/hug, and/or direct child to an interest area. Drop-off time should normally be a few minutes, but not to exceed 5 minutes.

For safety precautions, fifteen minutes after the scheduled start of class, all classroom doors will be locked and closed. No person will be allowed admittance into the classroom after that time. If you are arriving late or visiting the classroom after the scheduled start time, you will need to first sign the visitor/attendance log located in the preschool director's office. After notifying the director of your arrival, you will then be allowed admittance into the classroom.

It is important to pick your child up on time. We understand that an occasional emergency may occur. If possible, please notify Meredith Long at 842-7051 ext. 242. Please note though, if you are running late, and are unable to reach anyone at the YMCA to inform us, your child is kept calm and safe in the preschool classroom with his/her teachers. We will wait 15 minutes in the classroom, and then move the child to our licensed childcare program (all fees apply) while phone calls are made to the parents and/or emergency contacts.

Please remember the back door of the YMCA is a staff/handicap entrance ONLY. Families may not use handicap parking spaces to quickly park, enter, and drop off their child. Preschool families are requested to park in the front lot of the YMCA and use the main entrance to bring their children to school. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

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HEALTH CARE POLICY

A. Emergency Telephone Numbers

- **EMERGENCY**.....**911**
- Grand Haven Police Non-Emergency 1-800-249-0911
- Poison Control..... 1-800-222-1222
- NOCH.....616-842-3600

B. Emergency Procedure

1. If while at school, a student encounters an illness, injury, or emergency that requires immediate medical attention, the staff will follow the following procedures:
2. A call will immediately be made to 911 if the injury or illness is an emergency situation.
3. The parent, or emergency contact as listed in the child’s records, will be contacted. If parent or contact is unavailable, and hospitalization is necessary, one staff member (lead teacher or director) will accompany child to the hospital and take the child’s file and documents with them. We will remain with the child until the parent or emergency contact arrives.
4. During any field trips, we take all children’s white information cards along. If an emergency occurs, we follow the same instructions as above. First aid kits are also brought on all field trips. At least one first aid kit will be in every vehicle transporting children on field trips.

C. First Aid Equipment

1. First aid supplies are inventoried and restocked on a regular weekly basis. First aid boxes are located in all preschool classrooms. First aid is administered by any staff trained in First Aid/CPR (supervising lead teacher preferred).
Contents of First Aid Kit: Gauze bandages, scissors, band-aids, triangular bandages, cotton, thermometer, rubber gloves (next to box), instant ice packs, and tweezers.

D. Plan for Managing Infectious Diseases- HEALTH AND ILLNESS

The Green Health Appraisal Form and Child Information Card must be on file by October 1st. If any of the information changes throughout the year it is important for you to contact us to update our files.

1. **ILLNESS – If your child is ill before preschool, please keep them home.** Simply contact the YMCA at 842-7051 ext. 242 after 8:00 a.m. and leave a message for your preschool instructor or e-mail meredith.long@tcfymca.org.
2. **Green Discharge** from your child’s nose is always a concern, as is a cough (Please note that in some cases, a green nose can be a sign that a cold is “drying up” and that the virus is actually ending). We look for other symptoms therefore to **determine infection** which would include the following:
 - A green runny nose for more than 3-4 days.
 - A fever
 - A severe headache

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- A persistent cough lasting more than 3 to 4 days.

At the point that your child has any one of these symptoms, or a combination of them, we believe it is best to keep your child home, and or, have them checked by a pediatrician. Children are not allowed to return to school until a continuous 24-hour fever free period.

3. If a child arrives at school exhibiting any of the symptoms listed above, the supervising lead teacher or director will ask the parent to take the child back home.
4. If a staff person arrives at school exhibiting any of the symptoms listed above, the director will ask the staff member to leave work and return home.
5. If a child becomes ill at the center, parent or authorized person is contacted to pick up the child. A quiet area within the school is set up for the child until parent arrives and a staff member accompanies and supervises the child at all times until the parent arrives.
6. Any items or equipment used by the ill child or adult will not be used/reintroduced to any other individual until washed, rinsed, and sanitized.
7. If a child, staff person, or volunteer contracts a communicable disease, the center will notify families of the following:
 - Name of communicable disease
 - Symptoms of the disease
 - Director will notify all parents and staff in writing when any communicable disease/illness has been introduced to the preschool.
8. A note from child's or staff person's physician is required in order for child or staff person to return to school or work after any communicable disease/illness (i.e. Chicken Pox, Measles, and Strep). The note is placed in child's folder.
9. Children and staff persons that are unable to attend school due to general illnesses may not return to work until the following conditions are met:
 - Fever free for 24-hours
 - Diarrhea free for 24-hours
 - Vomit free for 24-hours

E. Oral Health Care Plan

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of children. Tooth decay is completely preventable. By following an oral hygiene curriculum while in attendance at school, children learn preventative and healthy oral hygiene habits.

1. Each child will be provided with an age appropriate toothbrush. For all children, only toothbrushes with **soft** bristles will be used.
2. All toothbrushes will be labeled with the child's full name and the date it was issued to the child.
3. Toothbrushes will be issued in September, December, and March. Toothbrushes will be replaced every 3 months, or when a child has had a severe cold, flu, or bacterial infection, and/or when the bristles are frayed or worn.

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4. Toothbrushes will be stored upright (bristle side up) in an open container that prevents contact with other children's toothbrushes. When not in use, toothbrushes will be stored out of reach of children.
5. The center will provide fluorinated toothpaste for use in the oral health care plan. All toothpaste will have sodium fluoride as an active ingredient and be approved by the American Dental Association (ADA). All toothpaste will be stored out of reach of children when not in use. Only teachers and Learning Tree Staff will have access to the toothpaste.
6. To prevent toothbrush contamination, toothpaste will be distributed to children via wax paper or on the bottom of the spit cup. Children will "swipe" their brush across the toothpaste to transfer the toothpaste onto their toothbrush.
 - *Children 2 years of age use a small child size toothbrush with a slight "smear" of toothpaste after snack.*
 - *Children 3-5 years of age use a small child size toothbrush with ½ a pea size amount of toothpaste after snack.*
7. All children will be supervised while brushing their teeth. At no time while brushing their teeth, will a child be unattended. Tooth brushing will occur after snack time in a group setting.
8. Children will participate in the "dry brush" method for tooth brushing. This method, omits rinsing after brushing.
9. Once brushing is complete a teacher will rinse the toothbrush and store it in its proper designated place to air dry.
10. Parental permission will be obtained in writing before any child participates in the oral health care plan.

F. Plan for Infection Control

1. Hand-washing procedure for staff and children posted at the preschool.
2. Staff will use commercial disinfectant or prepare 1/4 cup bleach to one gallon of water solution or 1 tbs. of bleach to 1 quart of water, labeled, and placed out of children's reach.
3. Director provides janitorial staff with directions for daily and monthly cleaning. Including: daily disinfecting of toilets, toilet seats, sinks, faucets, floors, all table top surfaces, kitchen counters; all mops disinfected with approved solution and the mop is stored out of preschool. All cleaning supplies stored out of reach of children in a locked cabinet or closet.
4. Supervising lead teacher supervises all staff for daily disinfecting of table tops before and after any snacks or lunches are served.
5. All staff trained in infectious control procedures and monitored daily using a check-list.
6. At the end of the day all dishes and utensils are properly washed and air-dried and returned to proper cabinets.
7. End of semester and monthly cleaning of all play materials supervised by supervising lead teacher.

G. Caring for Children with Special Needs

Learning Tree Preschool will provide public accommodation to children with special needs in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Learning Tree Preschool is committed to

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meeting the needs of all children, regardless of **special health care needs** or disabilities (*chronic health conditions such as asthma, allergies, and diabetes, emotional/behavioral issues, or developmental delay*). Inclusion of children with special needs has been shown to enrich the child care experience for all staff, children, and families of enrolled children.

1. Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2. All families will be treated with dignity and with respect for their individual needs and/or differences.
3. Learning Tree Preschool will be responsible for ensuring that confidentiality about special needs is maintained for all families and staff in the program.
4. Learning Tree Preschool will ensure that children with special needs are identified at the time of enrollment on the **Student Information Sheet**. Families will provide information regarding any special needs or other health care concerns at enrollment. Information is maintained in each child's student folder, shared with teaching staff and updated annually or as needed. Families will be provided with a **Special Health Care Plan** and an **Emergency Information for Children with Special Needs Form**. These forms are to be filled out by the family in collaboration with the child's health care provider and with a member of the child care program staff as necessary.
5. Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the preschool program to the fullest extent possible. To accomplish this, Learning Tree Preschool may consult with agencies/organizations as needed, provided parental permission is granted (Authorization for Release of Information form). Inclusion of program staff on IFSP and IEP case conferences is desired to ensure the child care program provides the most supportive environment possible.
6. All Learning Tree staff will participate in three annual clock hours of training in serving children with special needs and the inclusion of children with special needs in the classroom. Additional trainings that address specific accommodations will be given to teachers as needed to address the needs of the students in the classroom. Parents, health care professionals, and special educators involved in the care of the child with special needs will be consulted to determine accommodations and or therapy requirements.
7. The individual **Special Health Care Plan** and the **Emergency Information Form** for children with special care needs will be followed in all emergency situations. Learning Tree Preschool, in cooperation with families of students with special needs, is responsible for making sure the plan is updated annually for students.
8. The Special Health Care plan applies at all times while children with special needs are being served.
9. Learning Tree professional staff will work with families when

H. Medication Policy

1. Administration—Learning Tree preschool will administer any medications ordered by the child's health care practitioner.
2. Before any medications can be administered to a child, the child's parent/guardian must complete a "Medication Permission and Instructions form (BCAL-1243).

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3. All medications administered to children at the preschool, including but not limited to oral and topical medications of any kind, either prescription or non-prescription, must be provided by the child's parent.
4. All medications will be stored out of the reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, security and safety. This pertains to both the time when the child is in care and during the transportation of the child to and from school.
5. All prescription medications must be in original containers and with the label affixed. Over the counter medications must be in the original packaging.
6. Learning Tree preschool follows the **"5 RIGHTS" OF MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION TRAINING:**
 - Right child
 - Right medicine
 - Right dose
 - Right time
 - Right route of administration
6. Should a medication error occur, ECC, the regional Poison Control Center, and the child's parents will be notified and contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the facility.

I. Child Abuse Policies

1. Mandated Reporting—As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we are required by law (Child Protection Law ACT 238 1975) to report children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, we are required to report this abuse as follows:
 - (a) A teacher or caregiver who has cause to suspect child abuse or neglect shall make immediately, by telephone or otherwise, an oral report, or cause an oral report to be made, of the suspected child abuse or neglect to the department of human services. The phone number to contact is: 855-444-3911 any time day or night.
 - (b) Within 72 hours after making the oral report, the reporting person shall file a written report as required in this act. The reporting person shall then notify the Learning Tree Preschool Director. A copy of the written report shall be given to the Director immediately. A notification to the Preschool Director does not relieve the staff member of the obligation of reporting to the department as required by this section.
 - (c) The director must immediately notify the executive director or designee. The executive director or designee will assess the situation and, if warranted, report the suspected abuse or neglect to DSS, EEC, or the Child Care Circuit.
 - (d) If the suspected or alleged abuse involves an employee, the employee shall immediately be removed from working directly with children until a written investigation has been completed by DSS or EEC and the employee has been cleared and authorized to return. The employee will be paid only after this report is made. The employee will then receive back wages.

J. Grievance Policy

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1. Learning Tree Preschool strives to provide a positive nurturing environment for all. If at any time a family has a concern regarding their child, the classroom environment, or the conduct of any professional staff at Learning Tree Preschool, their concerns can be brought to the attention of their classroom teacher or the preschool director, Meredith Long. If families feel their concerns cannot be addressed with either of these parties, they may contact the Tri-Cities Family YMCA CEO, Michelle Bailey-Mesler. If needed, please call the Welcome Center to schedule an appointment: 616.842.7051 ext. 221. It is the goal of all professional staff at Learning Tree Preschool to work together with families to arrive at a suitable resolution for all parties.
2. If you feel that Learning Tree Preschool is in violation of a licensing regulation, reports may be made to the Department of Human Services.

PLAN FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

A. Plan for Evacuation

1. Daily attendance recorded each day by supervising lead teacher.
2. Evacuation plans are posted in every classroom.
3. A lead teacher leads children out of the building.
4. All classes meet at top of hill near the YMCA sign by exiting the classroom through the rear exit. Children will exit the fence by using the east exit.
5. Supervising lead teacher takes attendance book and daily schedule in evacuation whenever possible.
6. Supervising lead teacher and director arrange fire drills. There are three performed in a 9-month period.

B. Areas of Responsibility

1. **SCHOOL** – The school will retain responsibility of all children on premises until they are released to a parent, guardian, or other designated person, or until they have been transported to an official evacuation center, in which case, selected staff will remain with the children until they are reunited with their families.
2. **EMPLOYEES** – All employees will remain on the premises as service workers, as designated by law. Such employees will be subjected to whatever tasks are assigned by the person or persons in charge, and may not leave the premises until the same person or persons in charge give them official permission to do so.
3. **PARENTS** – Parents should not telephone the school; they should listen to the radio for progress reports on whatever disaster is taking place. Follow official instructions relayed by officials via the radio. If parents are able to reach the school without danger to themselves or without interference with disaster workers, they should come to pick up their children. Children will be released only to parents, guardians, or other designated persons known to them or to their parent guardians.

C. In Case of Fire, Natural Disaster, or Bomb Threat

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1. Sound alarm- pull on any fire alarms. Supplement with voice shouts, whistle, or bullhorn. Execute the plan for evacuation. Secondary exit plan: Exit out of back hallway door in the YMCA. Meet at baseball field.
2. Report fire- dial **911**. Say: "There is a (fire) at Learning Tree Preschool, at 1 Y Drive.

D. In Case of Threat of Violence or Gunfire

1. All classroom doors will remain closed and locked. Preschool director and teachers will ensure that this happens.
2. If possible, window blinds will be closed and lights will be turned off.
3. If threat of violence or gunfire becomes imminent, teachers and students will be prepared to evacuate classrooms immediately through the back exits of the classroom. Teachers and students will proceed to a pre-determined location.
4. Upon evacuation, teachers will account for all children and consult with law enforcement officials.

E. After Evacuation:

1. When safe within the pre-designated area, account for all children and adults.
2. Person in charge reassures children of their safety.
3. First Aid is administered if needed.
4. Building is not re-entered until permission is given by fire/law officials.

LIST OF HEALTH PROVIDERS AND RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Michigan – call 211 Michigan 211 is a phone number families can dial just like 911 to get answers to questions they might have about health issues, food stamps, doctors, diseases and treatments. It is set up and run by the United Way Foundation.

www.michigan.gov This is another great resource for parents. The web site can answer everything from educational questions to childcare needs, and even health related issues.

www.noch.org 616-847-5218 North Ottawa Community Health System is dedicated to the health and well-being of their patients. They can provide doctor lists and options, office hours, locations and much more.

www.wholefamilyconnectionottawa.com Whole Family Connection is a web-based initiative designed to give families throughout the United States free, anonymous and better access to community services. Using online profiles, Whole Family Connection identifies and matches families' needs with service providers in Ottawa County who can help them in areas such as education, health, social well-being, spiritual well-being, environment safety and economics.

www.co.ottawa.mi.us This is another great resource that is more specific to Ottawa County.

BITING POLICY

No parent wants to hear that their child has been bitten (or has bitten another child) while in preschool, but it does happen. The good news is that most bites are harmless and don't break the skin. First, let us assure you that biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four

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months of age. Secondly, rest assured that the safety of the children in our programs is our primary concern.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs in any of our programs at the Learning Tree Preschool:

A. When a Child Bites We Will:

1. Head off biting situations before they occur.
2. Teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior.
3. Take proper steps to progress to other acceptable behaviors with the biter. Use a reward or sticker chart if necessary.

B. When a Child is Bitten:

1. The bitten child will be comforted.
2. The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water and a cold compress applied if swelling occurs.
3. The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.

C. For Both Sets of Parents:

1. The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Incident Report).
2. Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.
3. After the third incident, the Director/Coordinator/Teachers will hold a conference with the parents of the biting child to develop a written plan of action.

Here at the Learning Tree Preschool we understand that biting is a common and expected behavior among young children. We can assure you, the parent, that we will do our best to prevent biting, and will work with families to help a biter get through this difficult stage.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES AND FIRE DRILLS

The Learning Tree will close during severe weather in conjunction with the Grand Haven Public Schools. The closings will be broadcast by radio station WGHN 92.1 FM and by television on WZZM 13 as well as WOOD TV 8. (If Grand Haven has a 2-hour delay due to fog, ice, etc...we will be closed for the AM session ONLY). **Any television broadcast** that states Grand Haven Public Schools are closed, indicates therein that Learning Tree Preschool is also closed.

Children will participate in routine fire and tornado safety drills. In the event of a fire, a map is posted in each classroom which shows the escape route to be taken. In the event of a tornado alert, children will be kept within the YMCA shelter area (Basement Ace Place/Racquetball Hallway). Parents may pick up their child from that area if they so choose.

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NOTES TO PARENTS - MONTHLY NEWSLETTER/CALENDAR

It is important for you to carefully read the monthly calendar/newsletter that will be sent home with your child as they will include important information about any extra materials needed, special activity/party times, when to bring share and tell items, and snack bucket schedule. We want every child to be able to participate in all planned activities. You can find activities on our website as well at, www.tcfymca.org/learningtree. A school wide electronic newsletter will also be emailed each month. This newsletter will have links to classroom calendars, additional family resources, and important reminders.

SNACKS

With the exception of our young fives and GSRP classrooms, we will be sending home a snack bucket on a rotational basis throughout the year. Children look forward to the snack bucket and usually love to help fill it with their favorite healthy snack. This gives the children some responsibility and makes them feel good about bringing a snack for the class to share.

During our snack time we like to have a variety of nutritious foods. The snack bucket allows the children the opportunity to try new things. We like to avoid sweeter treats. Please save those for special occasions such as birthday celebrations or holiday parties.

Our Young Fives students each bring their own individual healthy snack daily. Water and cups will be provided. Snacks may be sent in a lunch box. Please provide all necessary utensils and napkins for your snack. Snack is a time for the students and teachers to sit down together, socialize, and practice appropriate manners and conversation skills.

Healthy snacks will be provided for all students enrolled in the GSRP classroom. Snacks will be selected from our list of healthy snack suggestions. All Learning Tree classrooms can reference this list for healthy options to send to school for snack.

Healthy Snack Suggestions for Preschool include:

Any bite size pieces of fruit, vegetables, dip for fruit/vegetables, graham crackers, fun shaped crackers, cheese, muffins, granola bars, pretzels, popcorn, finger jello, rice krispie treats, yogurt, pudding, trail mix, breads, etc. Please provide all necessary utensils and napkins for your snack. We will provide water with all snacks. Please note that Learning Tree is NOT a peanut or nut free facility. If your child cannot enjoy snacks with peanuts or nuts, please note this information on the Student Information Sheet and inform your classroom teacher.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special time for your child. To help recognize your child's special day, we try to schedule the snack bucket on or before your child's birthday. Sweeter treats are welcome when celebrating class birthdays.

An additional to celebrate your child's birthday is to have your child bring in a "birthday gift" for the classroom. In the past, some "gifts" included books, toys, or puzzles to donate to our Learning Tree classroom. All birthday "gifts" should be signed, dated and if possible have a picture of your

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child on the back or inside front cover. These items should be wrapped and will be opened at circle time by your child.

We have received many wonderful birthday books that have enabled us to expand our library for the children and great toys to enhance our table tops/play areas. We appreciate your extra effort. Summer birthdays will be celebrated during the school year. Additional information will be available in the monthly newsletters.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

It is our goal in the Learning Tree program to provide an environment that encourages positive behavior, attitudes and a healthy self-image. Discipline is individualized for each child. It is directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. We use positive guidance techniques to redirect the child's behavior. Teachers focus on teaching social skills, appropriate interactions and natural consequences.

At no time will a child be physically harmed in any way or deprived of a snack as a form of punishment. The only time physical restraint may be necessary is to keep a child from harming themselves or others. (i.e. banging their head against the wall or thrashing out at another child) If necessary, our discipline policy includes the use of "time outs".

The following steps will be taken by the teaching team:

- Guidance/discipline will be consistent, developmentally appropriate and realistic. Redirection to a new activity or more appropriate situation.
- State the behaviors the child should be using and the behaviors that are inappropriate.
- Support other children's expression of their feelings about the child's actions or words.
- Remove to a quiet area, under direct adult supervision, for a short period of time, if necessary.
- Remove the child from the classroom situation under the direct supervision of a program staff member.
- Staff, parents and volunteers are prohibited from using the following as a means of guidance/discipline or punishment.
 - Corporal punishment.
 - Shaming or ridicule.

If discipline becomes a problem, a conference with parent(s) and teachers will be held to resolve the situation.

FIELD TRIPS

Before any child may participate in any field trip, written permission must be obtained from the child's parent or legal guardian. Permission slips will be kept on file at the center.

The Fours and Young Fives classrooms participate in non-routine (off-site) field trips. Field trips are taken in volunteer vehicles and you may be asked to drive occasionally. Before any individual is allowed to transport children other than their own for the purpose of field trips, drivers must complete a clearance request through the Department of Human Services, clearing them of any

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involvement in child abuse or neglect. Clearance will be provided to the center before the field trip and kept on file at the center for all future field trips.

Field trip transportation rules are as follows:

1. All seats must face forward and have seat belts in good operating condition for all passengers.
2. The driver and all adult passengers will be restrained by a seat belt.
3. All drivers will be at least 18 years of age.
4. There will be no loose or heavy objects in the vehicle during transport.
5. There may be no smoking in any vehicle or on field trips when child care children are present.
6. All children under 8 years of age must ride in a booster seat.
7. All vehicles meet the Michigan vehicle code for safety equipment and there is a statement on file at the center.
8. Maximum limit of six children per vehicle.
9. All vehicles must have a first aid kit (see your child's instructor).
10. All drivers must have a valid driver's license (with no more than 6 active points on record).
11. All drivers will have proof of valid automobile insurance for their vehicle and a valid vehicle registration in the vehicle.
12. All drivers must have a background check from Protection Services on file at the center...see Meredith Long for application.
13. Each driver will be provided with a map of destination and will travel as a group with a lead car.
14. Each driver will be provided with child information cards for the children in their care.
15. Children should be supervised at all times and should enter/exit vehicles from the curbside with assistance.
16. Each driver must sign a waiver form each time they drive on a field trip.
17. At no time will a driver be an employee of the center and/or will the vehicle be owned or leased by, or registered to the center or employee of the center.

Parents will provide written permission for their child to be transported on all field trips. The permission slip will state the destination and date of the field trip. All transportation permission forms will be kept on file at the center.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

To enroll your child in the YMCA Learning Tree Program, you must register during the designated registration period with a non-refundable \$125 registration deposit. Remaining balances are to be paid as noted in the payment schedule.

Children in our Threes, Three/Four Combo, Fours, and Young Fives classes must be completely toilet trained (no pull ups or training pants allowed) by the start of preschool.

All children must have their completed Child Information Card by their first day of attendance.

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No one is refused YMCA membership or program services due to the inability to pay. If you require financial assistance, please contact our Membership Director, David Burdo at 616.842.7051 ext. 233.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Tri-Cities Family YMCA Learning Tree Preschool strives to provide a comprehensive preschool program for children and families. Regular attendance is necessary for children and families to benefit from the services provided. In order to maintain a high quality program, we rely on regular attendance and family involvement.

- In the event that your child should be absent from the program, your teacher and/or the preschool director must be notified on a daily basis.
- After three days of unexcused absence, if the center has not been notified, family will be contacted expressing concern.
- Professional staff and families will make every effort to ensure the child's consistent attendance.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A. If You Wish to Withdraw Your Child:

1. Parents should notify the YMCA in writing two weeks in advance of withdrawing their child to help provide a smooth transition.
2. No credit or refunds will be issued after the second week of classes except for authorized reasons. Registration deposits are non-refundable.

B. You May Be Asked to Withdraw Your Child from our Program for the Following Reasons:

1. Failure to pay tuition when it is due.
2. Failure to complete Health Appraisal Form and/or Child Information Card.
3. Child's immunizations are not to date (and there is no waiver on file at the center).
4. If a discipline problem becomes so severe that the class is disrupted and no acceptable solution can be agreed upon.

All children enrolled in Learning Tree Preschool and/or the GSRP program will not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.

LEARNING TREE CHECK LIST

Listed below are documents that will need to be kept on file at the preschool:

1. Copy of Child’s Birth Certificate
2. Child Information Card
3. Health Appraisal Form and Immunization Record
4. Student Information Sheet
5. Family Questionnaire
6. Signed Parent/Student Concussion Sheet
7. Plan of Supervision Form (family classroom volunteers)
8. Automatic Payment Authorization
9. Volunteer Driver Form (Fours and Young Fives only)
10. Signed Written Information Packet Documentation Sheet

Additional Items and Points:

11. Ziploc bag with child’s name on it and a change of clothes.
12. A backpack or school bag for your child’s papers (label all personal belongings).
13. Inform teaching staff if child is absent (Please call Meredith Long at 616.842.7051 ext. 242 or email meredith.long@tcfymca.org. Please give a detailed explanation of your child’s illness and expected return date).

LEARNING TREE PRESCHOOL CALENDAR

September 1.....	First Payment Due
September 12 (M/W/F).....	First Day of School
September 13 (T/TH).....	First Day of School
October 12 & 13 (W & TH).....	Picture Day
November 7-10.....	Fall Conference Days
November 23-25.....	Thanksgiving Break–NO CLASSES
December 26 – January 6.....	Winter Break–NO CLASSES
February 6-8.....	Registration for Fall 2015
March 3.....	In-Service Day–NO CLASSES
March 1-9.....	Spring Conference Days
March 31–April 7.....	Spring Break – NO CLASSES
May 1.....	Final Payment Due
May 29.....	Memorial Day–NO CLASSES
May 31 (W).....	Last Day of School
June 2 (TH)	Last Day of School
June 3 (F).....	Last Day of School

PRESCHOOL PAYMENT SCHEDULE

All payments are due on the 1st of the month, September 1st – May 1st

*A \$25.00, non-refundable late fee will be added to any tuition that goes past 14 calendar days late.

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MEET OUR STAFF

MEREDITH LONG- Child Development Director

Meredith attended Vassar College, where she earned her Bachelors in Psychology and completed the necessary coursework to earn her elementary education certificate. She taught special education before teaching preschool at the YMCA from 2010-2014. Meredith completed her Masters in Early Childhood Education at Grand Valley State University in August of 2016. She and her husband, Sean, live in Grand Haven with their four children, Hannah, Parker, Matthew, and Jace.

AUDRA ALLEN- Instructor

Audra has a BA in English from Hope College and worked at Learning Tree as a substitute teacher during the 2015-2016 school year. Now that her children are a bit older she is excited to join our teaching staff. Audra lives in Grand Haven with her husband Dan and their three children. Audra also lifeguards at the Y and loves to swim with her kids.

HILARY BRIDWELL – Instructor

Hilary has a bachelor's degree in early childhood development from Kaplan University. She has been working with the YMCA since 2012. Hilary lives in Grand Haven with her husband, Evan, and their two daughters Riley and Olivia.

TRACY CASEY- Instructor

Tracy graduated from Ferris State University and has a degree in Child Development. Prior to staying home with her young children, she was a preschool teacher at the Creative Learning Center in Grand Rapids, MI. She joined our staff in 2009. She lives in Grand Haven with her husband, Collin and three boys, Sean, Cameron, and Jacob.

TRACY EASTON – Instructor

Tracy has a BA degree from Kendall College of Art & Design. She has been employed at the YMCA since 1998 and has played an instrumental role working in the Child Development Department. She joined our preschool staff in 2003, teaching in the 3's, 4's, and our Young 5's program. Tracy lives in Grand Haven with her husband, Mark and daughter, Holly.

SARAH FLORES – Instructor

Sarah joins the Learning Tree after teaching in the early childhood setting in Hawaii for the past two years. Sarah, a Michigan native, is happy to return stateside and join Learning Tree. Sarah earned her CDA in 2015. Sarah lives with her husband, Rob, in Spring Lake.

LINDSEY FREIN – Instructor

Lindsey attended Grand Rapids Community College with a focus on child development. She has previously been employed by the Kettle Moraine and Milwaukee YMCAs in preschool, childcare, and summer camp programs. She has also served as a counselor, waterfront director, and assistant director at Camp Henry in Newaygo, MI. She is excited to be joining our team of teachers and working with your children. Lindsey lives in Grand Haven with her husband, Scott, and two young boys, Mason and Logan.

COURTNEY OVERWAY– Instructor

Courtney, a native of Grand Rapids, has a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education from Kendall College in Chicago. She has taught preschool in Chicago Public Schools and also owned a home daycare. She and her husband, Ian, live in Grand Haven with their two sons, Asher and Eli.

MELISSA POLL– Instructor

Melissa is currently pursuing her degree in Early Childhood at Muskegon Community College. You will often find the Polls out and about Grand Haven with their son, Calvin, enjoying our beautiful community.

KANDACE ROSE– Instructor

Kandace is a familiar face at Learning Tree. Over the past school year, Kandace served as a substitute teacher in many of the preschool classrooms. Kandace also works in our Licensed Childcare program. Kandace is looking forward to becoming part of the Learning Tree staff as she pursues her CDA. Kandace lives in Grand Haven with her two daughters, Lyllian and Osilyn.

SARAH SHEFFIELD– Instructor

Sarah attended Baker College, where she earned her degree in Early Childhood Education. She has been teaching preschool for the past 8 years in Whitehall and has recently moved back to Grand Haven to join the YMCA Learning Tree Team. She lives with her husband Nick and son Ryan.

JENNIFER SHERWOOD– Instructor

Jennifer came to the Learning Tree staff after employment at the Muskegon YMCA as a lead teacher in their day care and has been teaching in our Learning Tree program since 2000. She completed her education in Early Child Development at Muskegon Community College. Jennifer lives in Muskegon with her three children Ryan, Katelyn, and Emma.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL LEARNING TREE STAFF COMPLETE THE ANNUAL REQUIRED HOURS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CPR, AND HAVE BEEN CLEARED THROUGH CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES AS WELL AS THE MICHIGAN STATE POLICE.