

# Parent/ Guardian Handbook



# GreenTrees

Early Learning Center, Inc.

**STRONG ROOTS IN EDUCATION**

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Monday - Friday 6:30am- 6:00pm

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*All policies listed in this handbook are subject to change. Please consult the online version of this handbook on the GTELC website to be certain that you have the most up-to-date information.*

## **1. Organization Background**

### **A. History**

Green Trees was founded in 1985 under the name "The Good Shepherd Child Care Center" as a ministry of The Church of the Good Shepherd and St. John the Evangelist. In 2013 Green Trees separately incorporated as a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation. In 2017 the name changed to "Green Trees Early Learning Center, inc.".

We are tax exempt under IRS 501(c)3, and our tax ID number is 46-3476142. Green Trees is licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### **B. Mission Statement**

Our mission is to serve children of all backgrounds, to cultivate strong roots in education and our community, and to open doors to the wonders of the world around us.

### **C. Staff Information**

Our Director holds a college degree and all staff have college degrees or professional training. Green Trees strongly encourages staff to pursue higher education and provides tuition assistance to those who do so. Staff members attend annual training in fire safety, water safety, food safety, emergency planning, and developmentally appropriate practices. All staff complete a minimum of 12 hours per year of continuing professional education. Pediatric First Aid/CPR and Mandated Reporter training is required of all Green Trees staff.

### **D. Keystone Stars**

Keystone STARS is Pennsylvania's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) initiative that recognizes quality improvement efforts of early learning programs. Green Trees is awarded a Star Four out of Four rating. Early learning centers voluntarily participate and earn stars based on staff education, the learning environment, leadership and family and community involvement. Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services website [dhs.pa.gov](http://dhs.pa.gov) has additional information available for parents and staff.

### **E. PA Pre-K Counts Program**

Designed for families with eligible students between age 3 years until the entry age for kindergarten, PA Pre-K Counts is a fully funded program offered during our regular hours of operation. Families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty level, reside in Pennsylvania and meet the age requirement are eligible to apply. Pre-K Counts follows the DVSD calendar for closures and delays. The class meets Monday thru Friday from 8:30am-1:30pm and includes breakfast and lunch through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) at no cost. Participating families are required to attend an orientation to receive information on attendance policy, flexible instruction plan and student and families' services included in the program among other information. Wrap around care for hours outside of the 8:30am-1:30pm schedule may be available.

## **2. Early Learning Programs**

Children attend Green Trees programs based on age and development. The groups are:

Infant	6 weeks – 12 months
Young Toddler	13 months - 24 months
Older Toddler	2 years – 3 Years
Preschool	3 years – 4 years
Preschool/Pre-K	4 years – 5 years
Elementary School Age	5 years – 12 years

We follow the mandatory staff to child ratios outlined by our State Licensing Board

Infant	1:4
Young Toddler	1:5
Older Toddler	1:6
Pre-school	1:10
School Age	1:12

Appropriate student placement and advancement is determined by the Director.

Children remain in the infant program until they are 12 months old and able to walk with confidence. Children ages one to three years will be placed in the young toddler or older toddler program based on age and development. No toddler may move to the preschool program until completely toilet trained. A child must be at least three years old and income

eligible in order to qualify for the Pre-K counts class. A child must be at least three years old to be in preschool. According to Keystone Star guidelines, children younger than school age may not stay in the same class for longer than two years. Our school age program is coordinated with the three Delaware Valley School District elementary schools and provides bus service to and from each location.

Green Trees operates two sessions a year: the school year enrollment for late-August through mid-June, with dates corresponding to the Delaware Valley School District sessions; and a separate summer camp session mid-June-mid-August. Tuition rates are the same for all classes during the school year enrollment but are different for the pre-k and elementary school age summer camp program. Rate changes for the following school year are typically announced during the summer session and go into effect on the first day of the school year unless otherwise noted.

#### **A. Curriculum**

Each teacher is responsible for creating a monthly lesson plan in accordance with the PA learning standards and curriculum. Green Trees utilizes The Experience Curriculum, which is approved by Keystone Stars, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and the Department of Human Services (DHS). Lesson plans are posted in each class, along with a daily schedule of activities. Additional curriculum information can be accessed through Brightwheel.

#### **B. Screening, Observation and Assessment**

When a child begins at Green Trees, the Director observes each child before making a placement decision. Teachers periodically observe and assess the children using established scales and report findings to parents. Within 45 days of enrollment, teachers complete a full screening using the Ages and Stages-3 Questionnaire developed by a team of experts in early childhood development. Within 90 days of enrollment, teachers complete a secondary screening using the Ages and Stages-SE Questionnaire for social emotional development. Staff then meet with parents to discuss the screening outcomes. Green Trees uses the assessment system of the Experience Curriculum. Parent/ teacher conferences are scheduled three times a year. Conferences take place in the fall late November/ early December, winter early to mid-March and Spring early to mid June. Timing is reflective of the curriculum quarterly indicators and assessments. Additional conferences may be scheduled upon request. When a child is ready to transition to the next class, parents have an opportunity to meet with the new teachers and take a tour of the class. These transition meetings may take place during regularly scheduled conferences or will be scheduled separately with the parent or guardian of the child.

#### **C. IEP/IFSP**

Green Trees shares a common interest in your child's well-being, growth and development. One of the ways we advance this is with developmental plans and assessments. If your child currently has an IEP/IFSP, it would be beneficial to share a copy of this plan with us so we can work together to ensure that the guidelines are put into practice. You do not have to provide this information if you do not wish to do so. If you would like accommodations for your child and your child has an established plan it is the parental guardian's responsibility to provide a copy of the support plan prior to enrollment and provide updated copies whenever changes are made to this plan. IEP and special care plan meetings are conducted prior to first enrollment, during three annual parent teacher conference meetings and at any time during the year that there are noted changes to a child's plan. Teachers are highly encouraged to be present during the meetings with parents, support staff and administration. Parent teacher conference meetings are scheduled during the fall, winter and late spring months. Announcements are sent through Brightwheel with specific date and time information. Parents may schedule a conference over the phone, in person or virtually through zoom during these scheduled dates or as needed.

#### **D. Enrollment**

Green Trees does not discriminate based on race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or gender identity of parents or children. All admissions are at the discretion of the Green Trees Director. All children must be enrolled for a minimum of two days during the week and some classes require higher attendance. Green Trees does not offer rotating schedules. Green Trees accepts applications for children ages six weeks to 12 years. If there is no availability in the desired class a child may be placed on a waiting list. Returning students must re-enroll by the deadlines issued by the center to secure a spot for the subsequent session and any future sessions.

#### **E. Withdrawal**

Parents must provide one-week written notice of withdrawal by either emailing the Director or messaging on Brightwheel with the specific date of the child's withdrawal. If a week's notice of withdrawal is not given, parents are responsible for payment of tuition before any records will be forwarded. The security deposit is applied for the child's last week in care.

## F. Registration

Green Trees operates two sessions per year. A non-refundable registration fee of \$100.00 is due with each new student application. A non-refundable \$100.00 re-enrollment fee is due for each subsequent session. The registration fee is observed per family and covers the enrollment of siblings. A security deposit equal to one week's tuition is due at the time of registration for each session (and may be carried over from a previous session). The security deposit will be applied towards any late payments. All balances must be paid in full before a re-enrollment application will be accepted.

## G. Head Start

Green Trees partners with local area supports for children and families. Families who are enrolling in the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts Program but have been identified as having 100% or less income according to the federal poverty line, will be referred to the Scranton Head Start Agency for potential placement. Families may choose to continue enrollment with Green Trees in lieu of placement in a Head Start facility.

## H. Tuition

School Year 2025-2026 rates are for up to 9hrs of care/day:

Infant Class: \$63/day.	Pre-K Class: \$48/day.
Toddler Classes: \$53/day.	Pre-K Wrap Around Care: \$27/day.
School Age Class: \$175/week.	Pre-K Summer Camp: \$48/day + \$30/week activity fee.
School Age Summer Camp: \$220/ week.	*Extra Care- for children who require up to 10hrs/day of care, a flat fee of \$10/day will be applied.
Registration: \$100/family for school year enrollment and summer enrollment.	Security Deposit: Equal to one week of tuition per child enrolled.

For families with more than one child enrolled in a full-time five day a week program, GTELC offers a discount of 10 percent for all younger siblings, except that, owing to the very high-staff ratio required for infant care, no discounts are offered for children enrolled in the infant program.

Weekly bills are sent through Brightwheel to each family. Tuition is billed and payable on Fridays for the following week and is due regardless of attendance. All balances must be paid in full every week. Payments will be made through our childcare software brightwheel. Cash and check payments are accepted.

Annual statements for purposes of claiming childcare credits on tax returns, will be issued by January 31<sup>st</sup> automatically through Brightwheel.

Green Trees maintains and pays a full staff throughout the year, and to facilitate bookkeeping divides its tuition charges evenly among the weeks of each session, so that the fee for each week is identical regardless of whether a holiday closing falls during that week. Tuition is due and payable in full for each week that a child is enrolled, whether or not the child actually attends GTELC that week. There are no reductions in fees for illness, early pickup or any other reason for absence; the sole exception to this rule is the one week per year of vacation which each family may arrange in advance as set forth in Section 3.D. below.

Families receiving federal/state assistance with childcare costs from Child Care Information Services (CCIS) are responsible for timely payment of the copay portion of their tuition costs in accordance with this policy. GTELC notifies CCIS if a child's copayments are three weeks in arrears. CCIS regulations provide that a family's failure to make co-pays on time may be grounds for losing a CCIS subsidy.

Prompt payment is essential for the smooth functioning of GTELC and payment policies are strictly enforced. A \$25 per week late fee is assessed for each week that tuition is late or unpaid. After three weeks, a child whose tuition has not been paid may be dismissed from GTELC unless payment arrangements have been made with the Director. Please note that

GTELC maintains a scholarship fund for cases of true economic hardship; parents may apply for scholarship assistance at any time, but in order to be considered, applicants must provide proof of need, generally in the form of a tax return.

Each family's contract with GTELC specifies the hours each child will attend GTELC. Children may be scheduled for up to 9 hours of care/day unless participating in the "extra care" program which is up to a 10 hour/day schedule. Families who have children on a 9 hour schedule but stay 15 minutes or more past 9 hour in any given day will be charged the \$10 extra care fee. In case of a family emergency, GTELC will try to accommodate an early drop-off or late pickup (never before 6:30 am or after 6 pm). Families are required to state specific drop off time and pick up time in the child's enrollment form. These times may not change without prior approval of the Director. Any changes to a child's schedule must be requested at least one week ahead of time. Unplanned late pickups and early drop-offs cause GTELC to incur additional costs for staff overtime. Accordingly, GTELC imposes a mandatory early drop-off/late pickup fee of \$1 per minute outside of contracted enrollment times. More than three early drop-offs/late pickups without prior notification to GTELC is grounds for dismissal of a child from GTELC.

If the Delaware Valley School District observes a delay or closure due to inclement weather, the center will also follow this delay and plan to open at 8:30am or follow this inclement weather closure. Notice will be sent through Brightwheel to all families.

Pre-K Counts children who are enrolled in the 8:30-1:30 program and not receiving wrap-around care will follow all closures and delays of the Delaware Valley School District (DVSD). Only Pre-K Counts children who are receiving wrap-around care may attend on days that DVSD is closed but GTELC remains open. In cases of long term unforeseen closures to the Pre-K Counts program, the program may utilize the flexible instruction plan.

#### **I. Dismissal Policy**

GTELC will make every effort to assist every child who enrolls to succeed. However, if in the sole judgment of GTELC the continued enrollment of any child or family is not in the best interest of the organization, its staff and/or the other students enrolled at the Center, GTELC reserves the right to dismiss a child permanently. In the case of such a dismissal, GTELC will provide a full refund of any unused tuition.

Families agree that in the event of a disagreement with or complaint about GTELC or its staff, they will attempt to resolve the issue directly with the staff, management, parent liaison, or Board of GTELC, and will not air complaints or make any malicious or disparaging comments about GTELC or any member of the GTELC community on social media. Threats to staff members, inappropriate behavior or language in front of children will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal from the center. Nothing in this policy is intended to inhibit appropriate reporting to law enforcement or state authorities.

### **3. Operational Policies**

#### **A. Arrival/Departure**

Parent parking is in the rear of the building. A parent, guardian or designated adult MUST escort each child to the front door/entryway and ring the doorbell. A teacher will be there shortly to greet the family, obtain any pertinent information about the child's evening/weekend and escort the child to their class. In the afternoon for pick up time, please follow the same procedure, ring the doorbell and a teacher will be there shortly to escort your child to you for dismissal. Please make sure to park completely in a parking spot. Parents and guardians must walk their child completely to the front door for the child to be admitted into care or released from care.

If a parent or guardian is not dropping off or picking up, please ensure the individual is an identified adult 18 years or older. Children will not be admitted into care or depart from care to an individual who is not the parent, guardian, or designated adult 18 years or older. Designated pick up individuals are only identified by the parents or guardians and must be added to the child's authorized release/ emergency contact list on Brightwheel. Please advise the authorized individual

to have their driver's license or state identification card for staff to verify identity.

Please keep goodbyes brief. The longer a departure is prolonged, the harder it may be for a child to adjust. Staff are extremely busy at drop off and pick up time caring for children in their class. For supervision and ratio purposes, if parents need to discuss a concern regarding their child please schedule a separate parent teacher conference.

Please check brightwheel for up-to-date information regarding center and child issues. Daily communications occur through Brightwheel and detail child's meals, snacks, check in/out time, activities, photos and for younger children in the infant and toddler classes include bottles and diaper changes. Parents may also utilize the messenger function of Brightwheel to contact their child's teacher or a program administrator. They are available upon request for all other age groups. Parents/guardians may choose a maximum amount of 9 hours/day of care for a child in a full day class program. Drop off time and pick up time must remain consistent as we staff according to ratios and schedules of children in each class. We ask that all drop offs occur prior to 10 am so as to not disrupt instruction and children preparing for lunch and rest time.

## **B. Attendance**

A parent or guardian MUST call when a child is to be absent and inform Green Trees of the nature of the absence and projected date of return. For school age students, the parents must inform Green Trees if the child will not be on the afternoon bus. A daily message is sent through Brightwheel to confirm bussing. If a child is absent without notice for 3 days, Green Trees will attempt to contact the family regarding the reason for the absence. After 2 weeks, the child will be considered as withdrawn and his/her spot may be offered to another child. Any belongings left past this time will be disposed of.

If a student's contracted schedule needs to be changed for a compelling reason, such as a change in a parent's work schedule, a new enrollment agreement will be required. Requests for changes in the terms or times of enrollment are subject to availability of spots in the class desired. If a family requests a change in schedule and Green Trees agrees in writing to the new schedule, then any vacancy in a class created by the change may be filled immediately. Any further changes, including a change back to an earlier schedule, will be subject to availability.

Children enrolled in the Pre K Counts program are expected to attend the 180 days of instruction. Children are allotted a maximum of 10 unexcused absences. Excused absences are defined as an absence due to mental, physical, or other urgent reasons. This may include illness, health or dental appointments, family emergency, death of a family member, fire, natural disaster or other extenuating circumstances. For absences to be excused, parent communication must be documented. For children absent due to illness, a physician's note must be received. After the third consecutive absence, parents will have a meeting with the program administrators to remediate attendance. Further absences will necessitate additional meetings. If a child reaches 10 unexcused absences, they will be dismissed from the program.

## **C. Inclement Weather/ Emergency Closures**

Green Trees generally follows the Delaware Valley School District inclement weather delays and closures. In cases that DVSD closes due to weather or other unforeseen emergencies that affect GTELC (such as a power outage), the center will also close. In cases of inclement weather and DVSD delays, GTELC will also delay and plan to open at 8:30am unless otherwise noted. Green Trees may also implement early dismissals due to unforeseen emergencies. If Green Trees must close early, all families with children on site will be contacted by telephone and children will be cared for until they can be picked up safely. All emergency closures, delays and early dismissals will be communicated through Brightwheel to families. It is each family's responsibility for planning for potential emergency disruptions to the operating schedule and plan for alternate care. Green Trees strives to make decisions on delays and closings as many hours in advance as possible, in consideration of families who require time to make arrangements. The decision will be made the night before when possible and not later than 6:30 am on the morning of the closing.

GREEN TREES is **CLOSED** for the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Last two business days before DVSD starts
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Labor Day
President' Day	Thanksgiving Day
Spring Recess (2 days generally in March or April)	Day after Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Juneteenth	Christmas Day
Independence Day	New Year's Eve (closes at 4pm)

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, Green Trees will close the preceding Friday. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, Green Trees is closed on the following Monday. Green Trees is closed for two days during the month of March or April for staff professional development days. These days are identified annually in the calendar sent to all families. Green Trees is also closed to students for the last two business days before the beginning of the Delaware Valley School District's school year opening in August, for building repairs, maintenance, and staff development workshops.

After a child is enrolled for one full year and is currently enrolled for fall, spring and summer sessions in the year may skip one week of tuition payment per year for vacation provided that two week's written notice is given. This one-week tuition exemption must be taken all at once and may not be split between weeks.

**E. Facility Rules**

Our rules help to ensure the health and safety of our children: they also help to develop a child's sense of self control. We teach respect for people and property at all times through compassion and consistency.

1. We use our walking feet inside.
2. We use our inside voices.
3. We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
4. We keep our feet on the ground.
5. Children may bring one comfort item for nap time. No toys are allowed except during Pre-K show and tell days.
6. We eat and serve nutritious, healthy foods. Please keep sweets and sugary snacks at home.
7. We wear closed toe shoes or sneakers.
8. Please keep jewelry and hair accessories for infants and toddlers at home.
9. We clean up after ourselves... this includes materials, toys and food/garbage.
10. No mistreatment of toys or equipment. Parents may be financially responsible for intentional damage to Green Trees property.
11. We remain seated while eating or drinking.
12. Children must accompany an adult when entering and leaving Green Trees property.
13. Only adults may operate doors and safety gates.
14. We use good manners... say excuse me, please and thank you. No foul language.
15. We listen to and follow directions given by providers.
16. We keep our hands, feet, and body to ourselves.
17. We do not pretend play with weapons of any kind.
18. Children are not permitted in the kitchen area.



## **F. Clothing**

Please provide an extra set of seasonally appropriate "dressed to play" clothing for your child including socks, shoes, and underwear. If a child soils clothes, they will be put in a bag and sent home for laundering. Please be sure to re-stock your child's clothing supply accordingly. Always dress your child suitably for the day's weather. Staff members are REQUIRED to take students outdoors every day, weather permitting. Be sure to provide snow gear if appropriate. Infants and toddlers use our covered porch. All clothing and nap items must be labeled and in a bag. Green Trees is not responsible for lost or stolen clothing, jewelry, or accessories.

## **G. Rest Time**

Infants nap at their own schedule, in individual cribs, while toddler aged children rest on soft cots. Enter and exit the infant area quietly to avoid disrupting sleeping infants. Infants will nap on demand throughout the day. Infants who are preparing to transition into the toddler class will begin following the nap schedule below one month prior to their expected transition date. Children in the PKC program and depart at 1:30pm do not have a rest or nap time. All other children in toddler and pre-k classes will nap between the hours of 1:30-2:30pm daily. Please send in a blanket and sheet with your child's name on it for toddler and pre-k classes. Please send in a fitted sheet for infant classes. The items will be sent home on Friday for laundering. toddler and pre-k classes.

## **H. Inclusion Policy**

Green Trees welcomes and accepts children of all abilities. Our program is designed to be child centered and each lesson plan and activity is designed with each individual child in mind. We support the full inclusion of children who require additional supports due to a physical, cognitive, social or emotional need. We partner with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to provide outside services for children of all abilities.

Indoor and outdoor areas are arranged so all children can move freely. Center play is designed so children can make choices based on their abilities, interests and needs.

Opportunities in the class are given for all children to participate in set routines as well as free play. Green Trees provides age-appropriate activities for all children. Green Trees recognizes the importance of social and emotional development in Early Childhood Education. We make every effort to encourage socialization between children and their peers. All class environments are created to promote growth in all areas of each child's development and the individual needs of his or her family.

We believe that it takes a great partnership between the Center, the teachers and the parents for each child's success. We value input from parents and guardians. Each teacher and the Center Director meet with families throughout the year to discuss each family's goals and desires for its child. We support families by providing resources for early intervention professionals. We work alongside early intervention professionals, who have knowledge and expertise, to help each child succeed.

Each educator at Green Trees receives extensive professional development annually in various elements of Early Childhood Education. Green Trees is committed to learning more about various abilities. Full inclusion of students is discussed and a part of our annual training plan.

## **I. Discipline Policy**

Green Tree's philosophy is to support and encourage positive behavior. The use of striking or verbal abuse is not permitted at any time. Green Trees will take the following steps for children with challenging behavior:

1. Reward systems are incorporated into classrooms to reinforce positive behavior.
2. If a problem arises, a child is counseled regarding the unacceptable behavior s/he is engaging in and reminded of the consequences for unacceptable behavior.
3. If unacceptable behavior continues, the child will go to a "safe space" in the classroom to calm down, and parents will be notified.

4. A phone call, disciplinary note, or parent/teacher conference request may be issued to parents. For excessive disruptive and/or aggressive behaviors a parent may be asked to pick up a child.

#### **J. Aggressive Behavior Policy**

Children behave aggressively for many reasons. Aggressive behavior includes, but is not limited to, biting, hitting, scratching, and hair pulling. Green Trees understands such behavior may represent normal childhood development in younger children. However, in the best interest of all children at Green Trees, we set limits regarding aggressive behavior.

If a child displays aggressive behavior regularly, Green Trees and parents will work together to correct the behavior. A meeting will be scheduled with the child's parents, the teachers and the Director to discuss aggressive behavior and develop a plan to assist the child and the family. Green Trees may utilize behavioral therapists and therapeutic staff support with permission from the parents, to assist in managing aggressive behavior. Green Trees employees are trained and educated annually on appropriate positive reinforcement strategies for children of all ages. If the aggressive behavior is not corrected within 2-6 weeks, Green Trees reserves the right to dismiss the child. If a child's aggressive behavior is unsafe for him/herself or others, the child will be dismissed from the program immediately.

Green Trees does not tolerate any acts of severe aggression or violence from a school aged child. Depending on the severity and frequency of aggression Green Trees will determine whether a child can continue enrollment at Green Trees.

#### **K. Complaint Procedure**

It is our goal to strive for quality and excellence in the care of your child. Therefore, any positive comments or suggestions are greatly appreciated and can be made to the Director. We always welcome your input and feedback toward the care of your child. The Director appreciates questions or discussions of any kind that affect a positive outcome for your child. However, if you feel there is a problem, please follow the steps as listed:

1. Speak with the teacher of your child. Reach out to your Parent Representative.
2. Allow follow up from the teacher and/or parent representative. Responses from teachers are typically within one (1) day of notification on our childcare software, phone conversation and/or in person.
3. Schedule a conference with the Teacher and Director.

All comments made to staff members are relayed to the Director, so that the Director is aware of any problems or issues. The Director will listen carefully to the issue the parent has and will attempt to work with the parent. During a conference, it may be appropriate to discuss any other issues relevant to the child in the context of the complaint. Attempts to rectify the problem will be made within one (1) week of the conference after which reassessment may be necessary depending on the nature of the concern.

Parent Meetings are held bi-monthly and address any issues raised by parents that do not require immediate responses from GTELC. These meetings also provide families with opportunities to learn information about upcoming events, changes to policies or practices upcoming.

It is the responsibility of the Director and/or Parent Representatives to bring concerns to the Board of Directors; all concerns are relayed in a confidential manner.

### **4. Health & Wellness**

#### **A. Nutrition: Meals and Snacks**

Green Trees participates in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (\*CACFP). Monthly menus are posted in classrooms and are available on our website. Families must enroll in CACFP to receive meals and snacks at no additional cost. Information on the CACFP enrollment forms is kept confidential. Parents of children who choose to not enroll in the CACFP must supply daily meals/snacks in accordance with the CACFP Guidelines on the Green Trees website. We highly encourage families to send in non-food items for special occasions. You may send in food for special occasions (i.e., birthday or holiday) provided you send enough for the entire class. Food must be store bought and labeled with ingredient information regarding allergens. Parents must notify GTELC staff at least one week prior to sending in special occasion food so we can make accommodations for children with allergies.

Infants may participate in the food program. However, CACFP formula selections vary and many parents prefer to supply their own formula. Parents must supply at least four infant bottles.

If your child has a food allergy, you must provide us with a written statement from your physician indicating the nature of the allergy and recommended substitutions. Meals for children with allergies are plated separately in the kitchen and labeled with that child's name. See the Director for the CACFP allergy form that is to be completed and kept on record. Green Trees does not serve peanuts, tree nuts, or nut butters. No child may bring any food or drinks containing tree nuts, peanuts or nut butters into the center.

#### Meal Service Schedule

Meals and snacks are served following the schedule listed below. Children will not be served the meal or snack if they arrive outside of the meal service time. Please ensure that you are dropping off your child during or before the meal service time if you would like them to receive the meal.

	Infant Class	Toddler Classes	Pre-K Classes	School Age Classes
Breakfast	Served on demand	8am-8:30am	8:30am-9am	7:30am-8am (PD) 8:30am-9am (FD)
Morning Snack	Served on demand	10am-10:30am		
Lunch	Served on demand	12pm-12:30pm	11:30am-12pm	11:30am-12pm (FD)
Afternoon Snack	Served on demand	3pm-3:30pm	2:30pm-3pm (WAC)	2:30pm-3pm (FD) 4:30pm-5pm (PD)

Children enrolled in the PKC program but not receiving wrap-around care may pick up breakfast and lunch for the center's "meals to go" service on the days that the center is open but the PKC classroom is closed. Families must message on Brightwheel by 8am if they intend to utilize the "meals to go" service.

Pre-K Children who receive wrap around care (WAC) will also receive afternoon snack daily.

School Age children will receive breakfast and afternoon snack daily during the school year for their part day (PD) schedule. On days that DVSD is closed but we are open for school age children to receive a full day (FD) of care, they will receive breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack.

*"All meals served to children under the Child and Adult Care Food Program are served at no separate charge regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. There is no discrimination in admission policy, meal services, or the use of the facilities. Any complaints of discrimination should be submitted in writing within 180 days of incident to the USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250."*

#### B. Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing helps reduce the spread of infection. Students wash hands upon entering the class, before and after meals and snacks, after using the toilet, when coming in from playing outside, or any other time as deemed necessary.

### C. Health Assessments, Illness and Medications

The Child Health Report form included in your enrollment packet must be completed and signed by a licensed physician within 20 days of admission. Children who have an identified medical need, allergy or intolerance must have their health physical and any accommodations requested prior to their first date of enrollment. Parents are required to submit an updated health assessment annually for children over the age of two years. Children under two years of age must submit a health assessment every six months. Families may check their child's Brightwheel attachments at any point in time to review their last health physical. Notices are sent to families when an updated physical is needed. Green Trees enforces the following health attendance policy, failure to comply will be grounds for dismissal.

A child with a fever of 100.0 or higher, diarrhea two or more times, vomiting, ear or eye discharge or pain, or development of unknown rashes will be sent home and may only return when he/she is symptom free for 24 hours without medication or with a physician's note. If your child is sent home with two or more symptoms they must return with a doctor's note. A parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up individual on a child's enrollment packet must pick up a sick child within one hour of notification by GTELC staff. Parents are advised that it is their responsibility to arrange for pick-up of their child during instances of illness or injury.

Please keep your child home if she/he shows any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms
- Fever of 100.0 or higher
- Diarrhea
- Ear/eye discharge or pain
- Rash

If your child is diagnosed by a physician with any of the following conditions along with any other contagious conditions, we require written confirmation from the physician that a child has recovered completely.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Strep throat • Flu                                | • Croup  |
| • Severe rash • Ring worm • Pin worm • Bronchitis • | • RSV  |
| Pink eye  | • Pneumonia                                    |
| • Scarlet fever                                     | • Chicken pox, mumps, measles • Novel Covid-19 |
| • Coxsackie virus                                   |  |

Medications can only be dispensed with a prescription/instruction from a physician. The medication, including topical cream, MUST be packaged in its original container with a label indicating the child's name. Medications must also include medication type, expiration date, and dosage instructions indicating the length of time the child is to receive it. Parents must sign the medication log and bring the medication to the center. A new prescription or physician's instruction must be obtained for any additional administration. Parents of Green Trees Early Learning Center must sign the consent form in the registration packet for application of these products. No diaper powder is allowed.

Parents/guardians must sign consent to emergency medical treatment, CPR and First Aid and Sunscreen application for a child to enroll.

### D. Diapers & Toilet Training

The parent/guardian is responsible for providing diapers, wipes, and cream if needed. Staff may notify parents if supply is running low but it is ultimately the parent's responsibility to make sure enough supplies are on hand for proper diaper care. If a parent does not provide diapers and wipes, a child may not be permitted to attend Green Trees until they are provided. Staff are not responsible for initiating toilet training, or attempting to train any child unless the parents are working on this skill at home as well. Toilet training will only take place in the older toddler class. Young toddlers will only take part in toilet training if they are vocalizing when they need to use the bathroom.

A child must be toilet trained and in underwear to enter our preschool program. If a child is age appropriate for the preschool program but is not toilet trained, the child must remain in the older toddler class (as long as it is developmentally appropriate) until proficiency in this skill is established. Note that a child may not stay in one class for longer than two years.

## **5. Child Safety**

### **A. Child Abuse Reporting**

State law requires all Green Trees staff to report any suspected incident of child abuse. All Green Trees staff are mandated child abuse reporters.

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), also referred to as Abusive Head Trauma (AHT), occurs in young children whose necks muscles are not fully or well-developed at an age when their heads are relatively large in comparison to their bodies. Thus, any type of forceful or sudden shaking occurring with or without impact can result in head trauma as this group of young children are especially susceptible.

Injury prevention is a community effort that includes recognizing/communicating risk factors and common characteristics of injuries and sharing ways to lessen the burden on stressed out parents and teachers. Key strategies for prevention are understanding the emotional toll caregivers and parents face with crying children. Home-to-School consistency with calming techniques that are successful for young children are effective measures. Green Trees respects parents as children's first teachers and we will also provide additional resources to families regarding calming babies. Green Trees staff are trained in development of infants, techniques to calm & soothe infants and young children, recognizing signs of AHT, and reporting. Staff are also given opportunities to take breaks from the classroom throughout the day in an effort to support staff dealing with the emotional impact of crying children.

Child Maltreatment is defined as any abuse or neglect of a minor, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Green Trees staff are trained as PA Mandated Reporters and use the Childline number (800 932 0313) to report cases of abuse and neglect.

### **B. Brightwheel Childcare Software**

Green Trees utilizes Brightwheel for digital parent communications. All new families are registered by GTELC upon enrollment and will receive a unique identifying code per child. Once a child is enrolled at Green Trees, a parent/ guardian will be added to the notification system to receive important updates and announcements. We utilize one cell phone number and one email address per child for the notifications. It is very important to update your account with your most up to date email and cell number. Green Trees staff cannot change or update information. Parents may download the app or use the web-based system at [www.brightwheel.com](http://www.brightwheel.com).

### **C. Emergency Relocation**

In the event of an emergency evacuation Green Tree's designated relocation site is the American Legion Post, located across the street. Parents will be notified of relocation through Brightwheel.

### **D. Transportation and Field Trips**

All field trips transportation is provided by commercial carrier. Staff are not permitted to transport children at any time. In case of an emergency, emergency transportation to an emergency medical facility will be provided by a professional agency/ EMS.

### **E. Fire Safety and Lock Down Drills**

Green Trees staff are trained annually by fire safety professionals. Green Trees staff and children participate in monthly fire drills and bi-annual lock down drills for secure in place scenarios.

### **F. Non-Smoking Facility**

Smoking, including E-cigarettes, is not permitted anywhere on Green Trees premises.

**G. Security**

The doors to Green Trees are locked at all times. 6:30 am and 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. Please make sure the doors AND gates are securely closed behind you, and **do not** let anyone in on your way out. For more information on admittance into the building please refer to the Arrival/Departure section in this handbook.

**H. Visitor Policy**

All visitors must sign into the visitor log, located at the front entrance. Visitors must wear a visitor pass at all times while in the facility. All visitors must be approved by the Director. No visitors during nap time, 1pm to 3pm.

**I. Transfer of Records**

All student records are confidential and remain on file for a minimum of 1 year after contract termination. All requests for transfer of records must be submitted in writing. Green Trees will transfer records within 15 days of written request, as long as a child's account is in good standing.

**J. Health and Safety Policy**

Green Trees Early Learning Center, Inc. is following the CDC health and safety guidelines, Pennsylvania guidelines and all Department of Human Services cleaning and sanitizing routines to prevent and to reduce the spread of infection. You acknowledge the risk of possible exposure.

**Green Trees Early Learning Center Inc.  
102 County Rd. 2001  
Milford, PA 18337**

#### **K. Nondiscrimination Policy Statement**

Green Trees Early Learning Center, Inc. is an independent, non-denominational, nonprofit center for early childhood education. Green Trees does not discriminate based on race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or gender identity of parents or children. Policies, procedures, and practices are designed to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, English Language Proficiency, age, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Opportunities are provided for applicants with disabilities and reasonable accommodations are made to meet the physical or mental limitations of qualified students. Program Services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any person who believes he/she has been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

**PA Human Relations  
Commission Harrisburg Regional  
Office  
333 Market Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
Tel. (717) 787-4410  
Fax (717) 787-0420, (717) 772-4340**

**US Dept. Of Health & Human  
Services Office of Civil Rights  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.  
150 S. Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1911  
Tel. (215)861-4441  
TDD 1-800- 537-7697**

**Department of Public Welfare  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 225 Health & Welfare  
Bldg. PO Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675  
Tel. (717) 787-9695  
Fax (717) 772-4366**

**DHS Bureau of Equal  
Opportunity North Field Office  
Rm. 331 Scranton State Office  
Bldg. 100 Lackawanna Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18503-1923  
Tel. (570) 963-4342  
Fax (570) 963-3006**

FOR INFORMATION OR TO FILE A COMPLAINT, CONTACT THE SERVICE DELIVERY AREA (SDA) SERVING YOUR AREA OR YOU MAY  
ALSO WRITE TO THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS,  
U.S. Department of Labor, Room 14490, 3535 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104