Tallahassee Museum
Preschool
Parent Handbook
The Tallahassee Museum Preschool offers high quality early childhood education programs for children ages three to five years of age. The information in this booklet has been put together by the early childhood staff to help acquaint each parent/guardian with Museum policies and procedures for the school year program, spring break program, and summer program.

PHILOSOPHY
The Tallahassee Museum Early Childhood Education programs provide nature experiences for preschool age children. Each program gives the growing child the opportunity to develop an understanding and appreciation of his or her ever expanding world through a hands-on program.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Children learn decision making in a supportive environment where choices are offered.
- Children learn responsibility.
- Children use tools such as magnets, microscopes, scales, and magnifying lenses to explore the environment.
- Children verbalize needs to adults and peers. Children learn to share, wait for a turn, and empathize with others.
- Children develop an attention span appropriate to their age.
- Children refine perceptual skills and motor movements in the context of hands-on, theme-related activities.
- Children are involved in language arts and bookmaking. They learn relationships between speech and written words.
- Children learn concepts related to letters, size, number, and color in the context of hands-on, theme-related activities.
- Children participate in activities and share experiences designed to show that learning and the quest for knowledge are stimulating, entertaining, and intrinsically rewarding.
- Children become familiar with science concepts such as interrelationships in nature and conservation within the context of hands-on, theme-related activities.
- Children are prepared for school readiness using the criteria set forth by the State of Florida Sunshine State Standards and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program.

MEMBERSHIP

Students: All preschool enrollments include a Friend and Family Membership for the duration of the student’s enrollment. Membership forms will be available at Open House and must be turned in to Admissions by the last Friday in August. Memberships begin on September 1.
LUNCH AND SNACK

Students and campers should bring a lunch and afternoon snack, clearly labeled with first and last name in a soft lunch box with an ice pack. Keep in mind that we often enjoy lunch and snack out on the Museum grounds and will not have access to a microwave for heating food. Make sure all food containers sent can be independently opened by your student or camper. If you send prepackaged food (lunchables, string cheese, pouches, juice box etc.) they need to be opened prior to sending or your student or camper needs be able to open the package independently.

Please don’t pack anything that is a choking hazard. Whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, nuts, cheese cubes and any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/ windpipe may not be served to any child under the age of 4 according to DCF Child Care Licensing Regulations.

CLASS TIME

Drop Off:

You are to park in the Museum parking lot and walk your child to the preschool for drop off. Please help us teach good habits by arriving on time. Drop off time for a student and a camper is 9:00 AM Monday-Friday. Students and campers may not be dropped off any earlier than 8:50. Instructional time begins at 9:00 AM each day. All students and campers must be signed in by a parent or designated adult. Tallahassee Museum Preschool does not offer extended care hours.

Pick Up:

You are to park in the Museum parking lot and walk to the preschool for pick up. All students and campers must be signed out by a parent or designated adult.

- Morning Class and VPK only pick up is at 12:00
- Full Day Class and Camp pick up is at 4:00

Anyone arriving after the pick-up times will be charged $1.00 per minute. The late fee amount will be reported to the office and you will be contacted by office personnel with the amount and information you will need to pay your fee.
All individuals picking up a camper must show ID and must be listed as an authorized pick up on your registration application.

All individuals picking up a student must show ID for the first week of school and must be listed as an authorized pick on your registration application. If someone else will be picking up your child, you must provide **written consent and they must provide photo ID at time of pick up**. If you need to pick up your student or camper early, please notify the teacher when you drop off your child so that we can best accommodate you. Thank you for your consideration.

V.P.K. hours are on Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and are the designated days and times that participants must attend. All vacations, doctor appointments and family days are not valid excuses for absences. No exceptions will be made. If you anticipate vacations or frequent absences you may enroll your 4 year old in the Pre-K program and choose not to participate in VPK.

**ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT**

If your student or camper is ill, please keep him/her at home. VPK students need to provide a doctor’s note for absences. If a student or camper shows sign or symptoms of a communicable disease you will be contacted to pick up your student or camper immediately. If parents cannot be reached we must call your designated emergency contact.

All accidents will be documented with a parent signature required. You must keep us updated with new telephone numbers and email addresses.

**MEDICATION**

Tallahassee Museum Preschool does not administer nonprescription medication. Prescription medication must be in the original container with a label stating the name and contact of the physician, child’s name, name of the medication, and medication directions. The preschool must have written authorization from a custodial parent or legal guardian to give prescription medication.

**COMMUNICATION & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Students-Regular communication between school and home can improve your student’s preschool experience. Teachers will use electronic communication to notify you about preschool activities and calendar reminders. Please maintain professional boundaries and
refrain from dojo messaging and/or emailing staff outside of the Monday thru Friday 9-5 work day or sending friend request or attempting to communicate with staff on social media.

Any school year parent is invited to assist with fundraisers or to help or plan special events on behalf of the preschool (with Museum approval). If you have an idea or would like to volunteer in our classrooms, let us know!

If you feel the need to speak with the teacher or director, please make an appointment for a teacher conference. It is a courtesy and helps us to prepare to give you our complete attention. Teachers are NOT available during class time to discuss individual issues, progress or concerns.

Children’s progress will be documented through work samples and assessments.

Campers-Parents of campers need to communicate with the Preschool Director via email.

FIRE DRILLS & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

DCF Child Care Licensing Regulation requires fire drills and emergency preparedness drills (such as inclement weather) to be held monthly to acquaint students with emergency evacuation procedures. Dates and times are posted in the classroom after each drill occurs.

ABSENCES

Tallahassee Museum Preschool securing a spot for your student or camper in our program, no credits, pro-rates, or refunds can be given. That spot is held for your child whether or not he/she attends.

Important for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten participants: Attendance Records will be audited and monitored often by the State of Florida and the rules of attendance are strictly enforced. VPK students may not miss more than 3 days in a month. Non-compliance will result in termination from the VPK program.

If your child is dropped from the VPK program, you are personally responsible for your child’s tuition.
REGISTRATION

Students: Preschool online registration for the upcoming school year will open in April. At that point, days, times, and other information will be available online. A nonrefundable $200 registration and supply fee will be added to the 1st month tuition payment to reserve a spot for your student.

Campers: Weekly tuition is paid electronically at the time of registration. Camp registration may be canceled 2 weeks prior to the camp week or with a medical note.

ATTIRE

Dress students and campers for outdoor play. Closed-toed/ non tie shoes are required. Please remember that part of our day is spent on our trails and the farm. Please bring a labeled change of clothes to be kept at the preschool for emergencies. Parents need to change out your student or camper change of clothes according to the weather. Please help teach your student or camper to put on and take off coats and gloves independently.

OPEN HOUSE

Students-Parents will be notified of the date and time of the Open House in advance of the school year. All paperwork, registration, and health forms should be turned in by this time.

LOST AND FOUND

Please label all items from home. You may check with the Museum’s lost and found at the Admission desk. Items are held for 14 days.
TUITION

Tuition rates are set annually by the Museum.

Students: Tuition is paid in 10 monthly installments. Current credit card information must be kept up to date with the Museum’s Registration Office for reoccurring monthly payments on the 1st of each month.

There is a $10 fee for late payments.

NO PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE PRESCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

Your student may not attend if tuition is not processed.

Note: Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) participants’ tuition will be paid by the State of Florida as long as the contract requirements are met for attendance. The State of Florida pays only for 540 hours. If your child is dropped from the VPK program, you are personally responsible for your child’s tuition.

Campers: Weekly tuition is paid electronically at the time of registration. Camp registration may be canceled 2 weeks prior to the camp week or with a medical note.

TAXES

The Museum tax identification number is 59-0838924. We suggest you consult a qualified accountant for information concerning tax credit for preschool programs.

WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM

Students and Campers: In the case of early withdrawal, there will be no refunds.

Note: VPK participants refer to your contract requirements. Any tuition which the State of Florida would require to be repaid, the parents are responsible for paying.
TALLAHASSEE MUSEUM DISCIPLINE STATEMENT

Our goal, as staff members of the Tallahassee Museum, is to encourage and nurture self-discipline in our students. We can achieve this goal by taking positive action to develop a healthy learning climate and by using effective intervention techniques to interrupt inappropriate behavior. To create a healthy learning environment, the teacher will provide the students with love and respect. The teacher will provide a balance of interesting, stimulating, and challenging physical and intellectual activities for the children.

Discipline: Discipline should be positive, clear, consistent and fair. Florida law prohibits any form of discipline that is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited by all child care personnel.

IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL

Students and Campers:

1. Any child who runs away from the staff will be removed from the program. If staff cannot convince a child to return, the police will be called. Staff is not permitted to chase after children or leave the site.
2. Any child who harms himself or another will be removed (physical and/or verbal abuse)
3. Any child who abuses staff will be removed.

Physical violence is not permitted in this program. The Tallahassee Museum reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose behaviors endanger the safety of themselves or others.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students and Campers: Parents are expected to follow the program rules and treat the staff with respect. All program and/or staff issues, comments, and concerns should be directed to the Preschool Director. A child whose parents verbally abuse staff will be removed from the program. This includes sarcasm, criticism, yelling, screaming and/or negative comments directed at other staff/parents. The police will be called to remove any parent who appears out of control.
Tallahassee Museum Preschool does not endorse or insure our teachers outside of the workplace and ask teachers to refrain from accepting or offering outside childcare services to families of our center to include babysitting or transporting. We ask that you maintain professional boundaries and do not ask teachers to babysit or transport your student or camper.

The Tallahassee Museum Preschool does not endorse or insure our teachers outside of the workplace and ask parents to refrain from requesting teachers plan, host or manage a student's or camper's birthday party either at school or at an outside location. Tallahassee Museum offers Child Birthday Party Packages including a party host. If you would like to schedule a birthday party at the Museum please register online. You will receive a discount with your Friends and Family Membership.

TOILET TRAINING & ACCIDENTS

Students and Campers: Parents are required to take your student or camper to restroom prior to entering the classrooms or play yards every day upon arrival. Even if your student or camper used the restroom at home you must take them to our restroom to wash hands.

Children must be toilet trained before they may enroll in the Museum’s preschool and camps. A student or camper being fully toilet trained includes the following:

1) Be able to TELL the adult they have to go potty BEFORE they have to go. They must be able to say the words “I have to go potty” BEFORE they have to go.
2) Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.
3) Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet without assistance.
4) Be able to get off the potty by themselves.
5) Be able to wash and dry hands.
6) Be able to go directly back to the room without directions.
7) Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from the school.

Please bring a labeled change of clothes to be kept at the preschool in case of an accident. This should include underwear, pants, shirt and socks. If the child requires bathing after an accident a parent will be contacted for pick up. If a student or camper has frequent accidents,
and does not appear to be toilet trained to early childhood education teachers, the child will be withdrawn from the program.

HEALTH FORMS

Students Only:

Health forms, Florida physical (yellow form) and Florida immunization (blue form), are due on the first class day. **No exceptions will be made.** It is your responsibility to provide up to date health records upon expiration date. Failure meet these requirements may keep your child from attending class until requirements are met.

Florida law requires parents to be aware that due to extenuating circumstances some children enrolled in the Tallahassee Museum Preschool may not be up to date on their immunizations.

INSECT REPELLANT AND SUN SCREEN

Students and Campers:

**Parents or caregivers should apply these products prior to the start of class, either at home or outside the building.** Students and campers are NOT permitted to have these items in their backpacks, lunch box or cubby. Please be aware that the combination of several strong smelling oils and repellants in the classroom and hallway can cause breathing difficulties and severe headaches for children and staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The Tallahassee Museum Preschool employees will respect the confidentiality rights of every child who attends this child care facility. They understand that the confidentiality of each child’s information is strictly maintained to protect the privacy rights of the parents and children. They pledge that they will not discuss or otherwise communicate any form of information concerning the care or condition of any child with unauthorized individuals.

REST TIME & MATS

Students and Campers:

Tallahassee Museum Preschool believes that rest time is vital for children’s healthy development. Students and Campers will have a rest time of 1 and a half hour to relax with soft music and dimmed lights. Students and campers will be provided with a nap mat. Students and
Campers are not required to sleep but are required to stay on their mat and respect the other children’s right to sleep. Parents are responsible for bringing a blanket and a stuffy for rest time.

Campers Only: Occasionally, a G rated movie will be played at rest time for spring and summer camp only.

REASONABLE CONCERN

A student will not be released to any designated pick-up person if the staff suspects them to be under the influence of alcohol or medication. The staff will call the next designated pick up contact on the child's file to arrange for an alternate pick up.

I hereby acknowledge that I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Handbook and familiarize myself with the policies contained therein. I agree to comply with all of the policies and procedures.

Parent Signature: __________________________ Date: __________
# Preschool & VPK Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Circle Time &amp; Story Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30</td>
<td>Center &amp; Small Group</td>
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| 10:30-11:30| Museum exploration such as trail walks, animal encounters, farm, & gardening  
*In the event of Inclement Weather exploration activities will take place in the Discovery Center* |
| 11:30      | Animal Encounter                                                         |
| 12:00      | Half Day Dismissal/Lunch                                                 |
| 12:30-2:00 | Rest Time                                                                |
| 2:00-3:00  | Museum exploration such as trail walks, animal encounters, farm, & gardening  
*In the event of Inclement Weather exploration activities will take place in the Discovery Center* |
| 3:00-4:00  | Center Time & Story Time                                                 |