



Tallahassee
Museum

TREE TO TREE ADVENTURES

Tallahassee Museum
Preschool
Parent Handbook
2024-2025



Tallahassee Museum

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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 preschool program.

Our Mission

Our mission is to promote outdoor education and exploration that inspires children's natural curiosity. We are dedicated to fostering a positive relationship between young children and the natural world. Through hands-on exploration of the outdoors, we aim to inspire an appreciation for the world and learning that will last a lifetime. We strive to provide a safe, nurturing, and welcoming environment where children can engage in meaningful play, develop their curiosity, and cultivate a sense of wonder about the world around them.

By creating a safe and supportive learning environment, we aim to create a community of learners who are confident, inquisitive, and empowered to explore and protect the wonders of their world.

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.



Museum 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 the preschool staff by the last Friday in August. Memberships begin on September 1.

Lunch and Snack

Students should bring their lunch and snacks, clearly labeled with first and last name in a soft lunch box with an ice pack. Any food left will be packed up and sent home to allow parents to be aware of how their child is eating. Keep in mind that we often enjoy lunch and snack out on the Museum grounds.

We do not heat up or refrigerate food for students.

Make sure all food containers sent can be independently opened by your child. If you send prepackaged food (lunchables, string cheese, pouches, etc.) they need to be opened prior to sending or your student needs be able to open the package independently.

Please don't pack anything that is a choking hazard.

Whole/round hot dogs, pretzel nuggets, whole grapes, cheese cubes, nuts, popcorn, 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.

Please cut these items appropriately.

All food must be kept inside lunch boxes at all times. We do not store opened food or snacks inside lunch boxes unless there is an airtight container sent for that purpose. All foods will be checked for freshness before being served, determined by sight, smell, and temperature. The Tallahassee Museum Preschool reserves the right to refuse serving any food that is not fresh, does not meet food safety or nutritional guidelines, or if it is not age-inappropriate.



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 students is 8:45-9:00 AM Monday-Friday. Students may not be dropped off any earlier than 8:45. Instructional time begins at 9:00 AM each day. All students 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 children must be signed out by a parent or designated adult.

- Morning Class and VPK only pick up is at 12:00
- Full Day Class pickup 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 student must show ID 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 early, please notify the teacher when you drop off your child so that we can best accommodate you.

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.



ABSENCES

Tallahassee Museum Preschool securing a spot for your student 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.

ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT

If your student is ill, please keep him/her at home. VPK students need to provide a doctor's note for absences. If a student shows sign or symptoms of a communicable disease you will be contacted to pick up your student 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

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.

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.

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.

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.



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ATTIRE

Dress children 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 child's change of clothes according to the weather. Please help teach your child to put on and take off coats and gloves independently.

OPEN HOUSE

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.

TAXES

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



TUITION

Tuition rates are set annually by the Museum and divided equally into 10 monthly installments.

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.

WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM

We require one month notice for withdrawal. In the event 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

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

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 child.



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We love celebrating birthdays with our preschoolers! Keep in mind this is not a whole birthday party, but we welcome you to bring a treat to share with your child's class.

TOILET TRAINING & ACCIDENTS

Parents are required to take your child restroom prior to entering the classrooms or play yards every day upon arrival. Even if your child 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 child 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 on and off the potty by themselves.*
- 5) *Be able to wash and dry hands.*
- 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 child has frequent accidents, and does not appear to be toilet trained, the child will be withdrawn from the program.

HEALTH FORMS

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

Parents or caregivers should apply these products prior to the start of class, either at home or outside the building. Children are NOT permitted to have these items in their 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

Tallahassee Museum Preschool believes that rest time is vital for children's healthy development. Children will have a rest time of 1 and a half hours to relax with soft music and dimmed lights. Children will be provided with a nap mat. Children 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.

Camp 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.



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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 Daily Schedule

VPK takes place M-F 9am-12pm

Time	Activity
8:45-9:00am	Children are dropped off in the classroom, put away their belongings, and pick their class job.
9:00-9:30am	Morning Circle Time Including calendar, weather, story time, and songs
9:30-9:45am	Morning Snack
9:45-10:45am	Free Choice Centers & Small Group Instruction Children can choose from dramatic play, construction/blocks, Science/Sensory, Art, and table toys/puzzles
10:45-11:00am	Bathroom Break
11:00-12:00pm	Outdoor Museum experience such as: trail walks, animal encounters, gardening, and free play In inclement weather we will visit the Discovery Center, do yoga, or other indoor movement activities
12:00pm	Return from outdoors & wash hands **Half Day Pickup**
12-12:30pm	Lunch
12:30-2:00pm	Rest Time Soft music & audio books
2:00-3:00pm	Outdoor Play In inclement weather we will visit the Discovery Center, do yoga, or other indoor movement activities
3:00-3:15pm	Afternoon Snack
3:15-4:00pm	Free Choice Centers
4:00PM	Pickup



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