



## FAMILY HANDBOOK

2021



The Tree House Child Care Center was developed by two working parents like you. We value safety, transparency, service, diversity, and believe in the power of the early childhood years. We also understand the importance of time for working families and have designed the center to be the single trusted source for families with young children. At The Tree House, children can be competent, curious, creative constructors of knowledge. We welcome you to our program and are honored to have the privilege to play, learn and grow with you and your child. Here is what you can expect.

At the Tree House Child Care Center, it is our mission to:

- Provide a safe environment where children can play, learn and grow.
- Guide children as they develop skills needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.
- Support all families as they balance the demands of raising happy and healthy children.
- Set a strong example for all children through partnership, professionalism and passion.
- Act as a good neighbor and serve our community and the environment.

## VALUES

❖ **Safety**

❖ **Service**

❖ **Community**

❖ **Inclusion and diversity**

❖ **Creativity**

❖ **Play**

## GROW WITH US

Count on us for year-round child care services designed for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years, a pre-K readiness curriculum, and before and after school care for ages 6 to 10 years. Our forest of friends is thoughtfully arranged by compatible age groups:

- ❖ Seedlings – Infants and Toddlers (6 weeks to 29 months)
- ❖ Sprouts – 2s (30 to 36+ months)
- ❖ Shoots – 3s (37 to 48+ months)
- ❖ Saplings – 4s (49 months to school age)
- ❖ Kindergarten Preparatory Room
- ❖ School age – after school care

## PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

**A Reggio Emilia Inspired Boutique Learning** - The Reggio Emilia approach to education is best described as student-centered, using self-directed experiential learning in a relationship-driven environments. At the core, is the belief that children are inherently equipped with “100 different languages” through which they can express their ideas to support learning and development.

What it looks like:

- Intentionally designed classrooms as the third teacher.
- Emergent curriculum



- Project-based learning into daily activity.
- Daily, hands-on interaction with nature.
- Children are members of a community.

We believe the early childhood years are foundational for the development of confident, lifelong learners. The daily thematic learning activities (curriculum) have been intentionally designed to support school readiness and are part of your child's daily experience year round. Curriculum aligns to the early childhood education standards of quality set forth by the Michigan State Board of Education for preschool.

#### Young Preschool - Sprouts (30 to 35+ months)

- Curious and energetic learners developing increased activity tolerance
- Strengthening motor skills (large and small muscle)
- Beginning to identify emotions in self and empathy towards others
- Initiating self help and independence (emphasis on potty training)
- Meaningful play and outdoor experiences

#### Preschool - 3 year old Shoots (36 to 47 months) and 4 year old Saplings (44 - 48+ months)

- Increased independence and self help skills
- Expanding knowledge – emphasis on literacy and phonics for pre-reading
- Learning centers for all learning domains (fine motor, sensory, literacy, dramatic play)
- Emotional literacy skills
- Meaningful play and daily outdoor experiences

#### Kindergarten Preparatory Room

- Skill development in all learning domains
- Learning centers – emphasis on pre-reading, writing and early math
- Classroom projects and team activities
- Growing autonomy
- Emotional Literacy
- Daily outdoor experiences

Children enrolled in the local school district can transition from the preschool and/or Kindergarten Preparatory room into the school age program for before and after school care during the school year.

## FEATURES & BENEFITS

Features	Benefits
Hours of operation are 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	The Three House will be open so you as parents can go do what it is you do best while your children safely play, learn and grow.
Located in the village of Fruitport at 300 N 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue	Minutes from the on/off ramps for I-96, and conveniently located near retail, making pick up/drop off easy for commuting parents.
Caring for children from infants (6 weeks) to 10 years of age	Families with children of varying ages can rely on the Tree House to provide exceptional, age appropriate programming all in one location.
A licensed program, STAR rated quality program	The Tree House helps alleviate some of the worry that comes with parenting by meeting and exceeding the requirements set forth by the center participates in the state quality program.
Nutritious meals and snacks	We know good nutrition is fundamental for growth and development so the menu at The Tree House is packed full of fruits, vegetables, healthy whole grains and lean (including non-meat) proteins. As much as possible we strive to serve locally grown and made from scratch foods.
Certified and experienced teachers and staff.	Three House teachers are the roots of our program and fundamental to the child's experience. Teachers are selected for their educational training, knowledge of child development, experience with children, passion for care giving, contributions to the community and commitment to safety. Staff undergo rigorous background checks and finger printing.
Leadership team	The center is owned and operated by Sam and Jenny Ajwah who both hold MBAs and project management certificates with backgrounds in operations. Daily operations are overseen by the assistant direct with a BS degree and 30 additional hours of childcare leadership training. The center's leadership team is present and responsive daily.
Parent partnership	Parents and families are a child's first and primary teacher. Partnership starts at enrollment with the family orientation to The Tree House Child Care Center. The center uses digital communication to engage with families throughout the day. Teachers collaborate with parents on assessment, documentation and goal setting throughout the year.
A child friendly environment	The Tree House is a Reggio Emilia inspired child care center. In the Reggio way, the child, the teacher and the environment all intersect to wrap around the interests of the child and support learning and development. The center features a clean, uncluttered, open environment with natural light and hardwood floors throughout.
Pre-K, school ready curriculum	Children and teachers collaborate on project-based learning. Children are regularly screened and assessed. Michigan education goals and objectives for infant/toddler and preschool as set forth by the Michigan Department of Education guide curriculum planning.
Enrichment activities	The Three House Child Care Center embeds in its programming enrichment activities such as fitness, yoga, art, science, cooking, library, field trips and nature/community walks.



## SCHEDULE

**Daily Activities** - What will we do today? The answer varies. Every day is filled with discovery through projects and experimentation as children engage with the curriculum, enrichment activities and the outdoors. Opportunities abound to explore, learn, play and problem solve, while developing strong roots in foundational skills and school readiness.

<b>Morning</b> (6:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.)	<b>Mid Day</b> (11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.)	<b>Afternoon</b> (1:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.)
Arrival and Assembly Breakfast Projects/Curriculum/Enrichments Snack Outdoors	Lunch Nap/Rest Individual activity	Projects/Curriculum/Enrichments Snack Outdoors Free play Dismissal

**Hours of Operation** - The Tree House is open 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday  
The Tree House will be closed:

- ❖ Thanksgiving Day
- ❖ Christmas Day
- ❖ New Years Day
- ❖ Memorial Day
- ❖ Labor Day
- ❖ July 4<sup>th</sup>

The center may have reduced hours on New Year's Eve and Christmas Eve. Parents and families will receive at minimum 2 week notification of reduced hours due to national holidays.

If the Tree House must close, closure will be communicated through digital communications/app and the center's social media page. Text alerts may be sent through Brightwheel. Unplanned closure may include pandemic, severe weather or utility failure that could impact the safety of staff and children or declaration of state of emergency.

The center uses digital communication through an app to keep families and teachers connected on a daily basis. As a new family, you will receive an orientation to Brightwheel. Brightwheel is your source for daily progress tracking, program messaging, reminders, alerts, check-in, and picture sharing.

The Tree House Child Care Center provides care and services to all children regardless of race, color, creed, gender, cultural heritage, medical status, parent or guardian marital status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, disability or special needs or any other consideration made unlawful by local, state and federal law. The American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires reasonable accommodations be provided to people with disabilities. The center will collaborate with families, caregivers and health professionals to identify reasonable accommodations and strives to safely integrate all children and families into the center and its programming.



## FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

**Collaboration** - The Three House Child Care Center has created the following pathways for family and center collaboration:

- ❖ New family orientation
- ❖ Open door policy
- ❖ Daily class room check-in procedures
- ❖ Special events and community engagement activities
- ❖ Sharing special talents with the center or volunteering
- ❖ Advising on special projects and enrichment activities
- ❖ Conferences and progress reports

**Communication** - We believe that communication should be transparent and occur frequently. The Tree House Child Care Center uses the following tools to assure frequent and open, regular and consistent communication. The center will communicate with families through:

- ❖ Digital daily communications
- ❖ Center and classroom communication boards
- ❖ Child portfolios (documented through Brightwheel)
- ❖ Social media
- ❖ Email
- ❖ Newsletters
- ❖ Individualized communication plans established with families of children with unique needs.

**Cultural Awareness** – We believe that teaching empathy, inclusion, tolerance and curiosity helps children grow into a 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. The uniqueness each child and family brings to the center and program is valued. We appreciate the diversity within our community of children, families and staff. Cultural competency is embedded into the program in the following ways:

- ❖ During new family orientation and enrollment process is a key opportunity parents and staff will begin to share and learn about the unique attributes each child and family brings to the center including preferred and second languages, dietary preferences, faith, beliefs and traditions. The Three House is committed to incorporating this information into the child's daily routine and share with others as approved by families.
- ❖ Incorporate cultural aspects into the overall environment of the center through books, music, menu items, dress-up play, holiday recognition and special projects and celebrations.
- ❖ Encourage families to partner with staff to incorporate cultural learning opportunities within the classroom and curriculum.
- ❖ Support dual language learners (DLL) in the overall curriculum and assessment.
- ❖ Teachers and staff will engage in regular cultural and diversity training.



**Continuous Improvement** - The Three House Child Care Center is committed to continuously improving the program and services offered and to strive to be designated for our quality and known as the premier child care center along the lakeshore. We demonstrate continuous improvement through:

- ❖ Soliciting feedback from families.
- ❖ Encouraging families to provide just in time feedback and recommendations. Center leadership is committed to responding to all feedback/suggestions in a timely and professional manner.
- ❖ Engaging the teaching and leadership teams in regular safety, curriculum, and programming improvement opportunities.
- ❖ Participating in Great Start to Quality and completing quality improvement plans.
- ❖ Annual professional development for staff and leadership.
- ❖ Participating in local, state and national committees, councils and organizations supporting early childhood

**Media** - Children enrolled in The Tree House Child Care Center may occasionally be photographed and/or recorded in an effort to create memories (documentation) for sharing with families and/or to enhance the teaching and learning environment. Recordings, videos and photographs of children enrolled in the center will only be taken on devices owned by the center and not stored on a staff or family member's personal phone or device. An Informed Consent will be signed at time of enrollment indicating whether families grant or deny permission to photograph, video and/or record children and for what purpose.

#### **Assessment and Screening**

- ❖ Assessment is a continual process of observing, recording, and interpreting information to answer questions and make developmental and instructional decisions about each child. Teachers at The Tree House Child Care Center assess children throughout the day and document findings with various mediums. Children may also record their progress and learning in their own portfolios. Preschoolers are assessed according to the intermediate school district guidelines for kindergarten readiness.
- ❖ Screening provides a quick snapshot of a child's health and developmental status and indicates whether further evaluation is needed. The Three House Child Care Center uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3rd Edition (ASQ-3) for screening.

**Classroom Transitions** - Transitioning from home to group care is a big step for children and families and we strive to assure a safe and smooth transition. Families will participate in a Tree House orientation at the time of enrollment which begins the collaborative relationship between families and staff. During orientation families and staff will complete all required enrollment forms, collaborate to understand the needs and preferences of children and families, explore the facility and child's primary classroom and meet the staff and the child's primary teacher. Visiting the center multiple times while gradually increasing the length of stay may help some children adjust to a new routine and is encouraged as a way to help assure a smooth transition to the center. Transitioning from one classroom to the next is based on the child's age, developmental readiness, licensing requirements and space availability. A room transition is formalized with a room transition form, parent conference and review of all required student forms. Teachers will work together to gradually integrate children from one classroom to the next. Families are encouraged to visit the new classroom as often as needed and begin to establish a



partnership with the child's new teacher. Children moving into the 3 year old classroom must be potty trained prior to transition.

## CENTER OPERATIONS

**Admission and Enrollment** - Enrollment is the first opportunity for families and staff of The Three House Child Care Center to begin partnering in the care of your children and establishes the foundation from which learning can most effectively occur. The enrollment process begins before the child's first day of care (admission date) and consists of: 1.) family interview, 2.) completion of all enrollment forms, 3.) collection of registration fee and minimum two week non-refundable tuition credit (applied to the first two weeks of care following the admission date), 4.) banking information/ACH 5.) Brightwheel and badges and 6.) signed tuition agreement. The center will not provide care to children and families until all components of the enrollment process are completed. To pre-enroll, families must complete and return all required forms, participate in an onsite orientation and submit their registration fee and minimum 2 week tuition and all remaining paperwork must be completed before the child's admission date or first day of care. Enrollment is based on availability and full time care is prioritized. Part time care may be available if the center can match families into a shared schedule creating a full time slot. Families may pay to be placed on a waitlist if there isn't immediate availability for their child. Waitlist fees will be applied to tuition once the enrolled.

**Schedule and Schedule Changes** - At enrollment, families will be asked to provide Tree House Child Care Center with a regular and predictable schedule of when the child/children will be in care (start time and end time). Tuition is based on the most current written and submitted schedule of file.

**Attendance** - At the time of enrollment, families will provide a predetermined schedule of attendance. It is expected that families follow the submitted scheduled and inform The Tree House Child Care Center if/when the child will be tardy or absent from care. Tuition will not be reduced or refunded for absence due to illness, center closings, disaster, declared emergency, holidays or vacation. Families of children requiring extended absence (greater than 5 days) will continue to pay tuition in order to guarantee the child's place within the program.

**Withdraw** – A written Notice of Intent to Withdraw from The Tree House Child Care Center must be provided to the director. Families are asked to provide a two week advanced notification of intent to withdraw. Families who withdraw children without notice will continue to pay tuition as set forth and documented at enrollment. Families who choose to re-enroll will re-pay the registration fee. Notification period begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the 4 week draft period. Notification provided after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday will require the two week notification to begin the first Monday of the next billing draft. The center reserves the right to pursue legal actions for fund collection and families will be responsible for any legal costs ensued. Families not in good financial standing may not reenroll with the center.





**Tuition and Fees** – Tuition is set based on the most current schedule on file and due in advance of the period of service via a four week recurring electronic payment program. Tuition secures a child's space in The Three House Child Care Center program.

- ❖ Tuition is not reduced for child absence, holidays, vacation or facility closure.
- ❖ Childcare rates are subject to annual increase. Families will receive at minimum, 30 day advanced written notification of any fee increase.
- ❖ Tuition is established at the time of enrollment and based on the most current schedule on file regardless of center closings, child absence, illness, holidays or vacation days.
- ❖ Special programming and activity fees may be applied at the discretion of the director. Families will receive advanced notification of additional fees.
- ❖ Families with multiple children will receive a sibling discount of 15% applied to the child with the lowest tuition rate (excludes before and after care).
- ❖ Families will set up automatic bill pay (ACH) at the time of enrollment and before the child initiates care at the center.
- ❖ Late fees will be automatically applied for delinquent tuition payment and late pick up.
- ❖ Changes in a children's schedule that impact tuition must be submitted in advance and in writing.

A late pick up fee will be applied to family's tuition for picking up past closing time as outlined in the Fee Policy. Staff will begin to contact families at closing and will continue to try all authorized emergency contacts until pick up can be arranged. If no family or authorized contact can be reached within one hour, it is the discretion of the director to notify local authorities. Repeatedly picking up a child after closing is cause for disenrollment.

**Family Referral** - Families are ambassadors of The Tree House Child Care Center and may be eligible to receive an incentive for referring a new family into the center. The referral incentive amount will be applied directly to the family's tuition following the referred family's completion of all enrollment requirements and after the referred family's first 30 days in care. The family referral program promotion will go into effect at the discretion of the director and families will be notified in advance.

**Fundraising** – The Tree House Child Care Center may choose to use fundraising as a means to secure funding to advance the center's programming or as a way to contribute to a community not for profit on behalf of the center. Families and staff may not solicit funds from each other while at the center for fundraising purposes that are not on behalf of the center.

## **SAFETY**

**Confidentiality** - The Three House Child Care Center aims to ensure confidentiality regarding the lives and care of enrolled children and families. Records are reviewed by the licensing agency and leadership of the center only. If your child is involved in an incident with another child, the names of the parties involved will not be disclosed. Details regarding care will only be discussed with the child's family members. Staff must abide by this policy at all times.



**Access** – The doors of The Tree House Child Care Center are locked at all times. At enrollment, families will be provided with door security (badges) allowing access into the facility. Only families of enrolled children shall have access. Authorized pick up persons will be granted access to the facility by a staff member by ringing the door buzzer. Only staff shall open doors for authorized pick up persons. Staff will request that visitors and guests show identification should staff not recognize them. All guests will enter the facility at the discretion of the staff and will be escorted by and in the presence of a staff member at all times. Children are to remain in the care and control of the parent or approved pick up/drop off person at all times while in the center until checked into their assigned classroom and in the care of a teacher.

A sex offender convicted of a crime against a minor (even if a parent or guardian) shall not be employed by, contracted with or serve as a volunteer for The Tree House Child Care Center nor be on the property except for the time deemed reasonably necessary to pick up and drop off children. The director will consult the state licensing consultant as each situation necessitates.

**Surveillance** - The Tree House Child Care Center uses video monitoring for real time safety and security observation of main doors, classrooms, outdoor play area and kitchen. To assure the privacy of children and staff, video monitoring is not shared or available for live streamed and is the property of the center.

**Emergency Preparedness Program** - Written procedures are in place for the care of children and staff for fire, tornado, natural or man-made disasters, serious injury/illness/accident and crisis management. Plans include evacuation and relocation, communication and reunification and accommodations for children and staff with special needs. Plans will be posted in a place visible to staff and parents. Drills are conducted according to state requirements. At the time of enrollment and as changes arise (at minimum updated annually) parents/families will be asked to complete the child information record and child/backpack emergency name tag to assure accurate emergency contact information is on file at the center. Parents/families will be asked to provide consent for the child to participate in evacuation drills. Emergency plans and contacts will be posted on the center's website.

**Mandated Reporting** – All staff of The Three House Child Care Center are required by law to immediately report suspicion that a child in care has been or is being subjected to any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation. The Tree House Child Care Center staff will cooperate fully with authorities and will maintain confidentiality.

**Custody/Visitation** – Parents of enrolled children have open access to their children without notice when children are in care. The Tree House Child Care Center requires a certified copy kept on site when the child is subject to a court order (custody, restraining or personal protection) and will follow the order of the court.

**Affidavit Policy** - Staff of The Tree House Child Care Center will not provide written statements or affidavits of professional natures to families.

**Car seats** - Care seats are not to be kept in the center throughout the day. Parents will take the car seat with them after drop off and return with it again at pickup.



**Notification of Accident or Injury** - an Incident Report will be completed if a child receives an injury while at The Three House Child Care Center that requires medical attention. Minor incidents, accidents and/or illness are communicated digitally through app. Families will receive a copy of the incident report at time of pick-up upon request. In the event of a medical emergency or health incident, staff will contact 9-1-1 and the child will be taken to the preferred hospital via ambulance. A staff member will obtain the child's medical file and accompany the child while the classroom teacher will immediately notify the family starting with those designated as the emergency contact on the Child Information Record. Families will receive notification of minor accidents or injuries through Brightwheel. See Parent Notification of Accident, Injury and Illness Policy for more information.

**Pick Up and Drop Off** - A safe and consistent pick up and drop off routine is fundamental to the child's daily experience while enrolled at The Three House Child Care Center.

- A parent/guardian must physically check the enrolled child/children into the center each day by accompanying the child into the classroom and greeting the teacher, alerting him or her of the child's presence in the classroom.
- At drop off, the parent/guardian will use the posted QR code to check children into the center via Brightwheel and complete the required health screen questionnaire.
- Parents/guardians will re-enter the center for pick-up and check out the child from the teacher assigned to care at the time of pick up. This assures the child is under adult supervision at all times and facilitates the parent teacher partnership.
- Children will be released only to parents, legal guardians or persons listed on the Child Information Record. The Tree House Child Care Center asks that families provide verbal notification to the center if your child will be picked up by an authorized person who doesn't normally pick up. Authorized pick up persons will be asked to show photo ID. The staff of The Tree House Child Care Center will not release a child to a person the child does not know. Families are required to sign each child in and out of care daily from the center using Brightwheel.
- Children may not be picked up or dropped off to or from the playground.
- The center is accountable for keeping accurate, daily attendance records including the child's first and last name and each child's arrival and departure time. Routinely failing to check children in and out of the center may be cause for disenrollment.

**Field Trips** – Students may have field trips incorporated into their daily activities and program. In advance of a field trip, the director will provide advanced notification including destination, date, time frame and means of transportation. A signed Field Trip Permission Form must be on file within the center prior to child participating in a field trip. Parents may volunteer as field trip chaperones. Pick up and drop off to/from the field trip location is not permitted. Staff of the Tree House Child Care Center will conduct regular (at minimum, on the hour and with each transition) head counts during a field trip. The lead teacher will be responsible for carrying and administering first aid as needed and authorized to use his or her personal cell phone for emergency purposes only. For children under the age of 4 years, a variety of engaging experiences will be brought to the center for the children to explore and engage with.

Children will occasional take walks within the community. At the time of enrollment, parents/guardian will complete and Informed Consent indicating approval or denial of their child participating in community walks. Infants and toddlers will be strapped into a quad stroller, preschoolers will walk with



a walking rope and school age children will walk independently. Staff will be permitted to carry personal cell phones only for the purpose of emergency calls. All children to staff ratios will be maintained on a walk.

**Smoke/Vaping Free, Drug Free and Firearm Free** - The Tree House Child Care Center is a smoke/vaping free and drug free facility and premise. Smoking or the possession and/or use of drug and/or alcohol anywhere on the property is prohibited for staff, guests and families of enrolled children. At the discretion of the director, violation may result in disenrollment. At no time is any person permitted to carry a weapon onto the property of The Tree House Child Care Center.

**Balloons** - balloons are not allowed in the facility due to latex allergies and potential ingestion hazards.

## THE TEAM

**The Teaching Team** - Teachers are intentionally selected for their understanding of child development, teaching methodology, professionalism, engagement in the community and commitment to the profession. The team of lead teachers at The Tree House Child Care Center has at a minimum a college degree and/or certification in early childhood development with previous experience working with children. Assistant teachers have at minimum, college training and/or a certification in early childhood development. Each classroom is assigned a lead teacher who serves as your child's primary caregiver to assure consistency in the day to day experience of your child. The Tree House Child Care Center will utilize education majors, family studies majors, rehabilitation science majors, interns, and trained volunteers as a complement and support the classrooms and programming.

All directors, teachers, staff and volunteers at The Tree House Child Care Center undergo a thorough screening process, including fingerprinting, required background checks, and have been approved by the state licensing agency. Staff are certified in first aide, CPR and blood borne pathogens (infection control) and trained in safe sleep and shaken baby. At the time of hire, staff and volunteers complete a comprehensive new hire orientation and are trained to all center policies and procedures and state licensing requirements. Staff shall complete annual training assuring they meet and/or exceed the state requirement of 16+ professional development hours per year.

The Tree House Child Care Center follows the state requirements for teacher to child ratios per age group which assure children are safely supervised at all times and have adequate space to learn, play and grow. Volunteers and/or students will never be used to meet teacher to child ratio requirements but instead serve as valued complements to the program and team. Parents and family members are welcome to serve as volunteers. See [Supervision and Screening of Volunteer Policy](#) for more information.

**Solicitation and Babysitting** - We ask that families of the Tree House Child Care Center not solicit at any time directly or indirectly any staff for employment of any kind for at minimum 6 months after employment with The Tree House has ended. When families sign the family handbook they agree to compensate The Tree House Child Care Center the costs of recruitment, training, lost productivity, legal fees and/or court costs associated with solicitation of staff for employment that results in ended employment with the Tree House.



The Tree House Child Care Center discourages babysitting by center staff for families of the center. If a staff member provides babysitting services to a family enrolled in The Tree House Child Care Center, the staff member is acting on his/her own accord and not representing The Tree House. Before services are arranged, both the parent and the staff must submit a release form, not holding The Tree House Child Care Center responsible for the performance of staff including the transportation of children.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**Food Service** - Meal time is an opportunity for social interaction, sensory exploration and healthy habit formation. Children over the age of 14 months will experience family style dining for breakfast, lunch and two healthy snacks daily. Families will provide meals and snacks for infants and toddler until 30 months of age. The center will collaborate with families to establish a meal plan that transitions toddlers from 18 to 30 months onto solids and the center's menu at a developmentally appropriate pace. Children will have the opportunity to engage in growing foods, cooking and meal planning as part of the overall curriculum.

Meals and snacks are served during the following timeframes:

- ❖ Breakfast – 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.
- ❖ Morning snack – 10:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.
- ❖ Lunch - 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.
- ❖ Afternoon snack - 3:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.
- ❖ School agers after school snack - 4:15 p.m.

The center follows the guidelines established by the Child and Adult Food Program. The menu, with ingredients, will be posted monthly in the classrooms and within the center. As often as possible, meals and snacks are made from scratch with local ingredients. Staff will share in the lunch meal of the children as a way to increase sense of community, model positive meal time behaviors and assist children with meals. At enrollment, families will complete a Child Profile detailing meal and other family routines. Parents will also complete a food agreement form.

**Food From Home** - We respect the dietary needs and preferences of children and families and will work to the best of our ability to establish a meals plan that meets a child's individual needs. It's recognized that some children's preferences may require that meals from home replace the center's offerings. Families who choose to routinely provide food from home, including ready to feed formula and prepared baby food, will complete a Food Agreement Plan at the time of enrollment.

**Birthdays** - The Three House Child Care Center enjoys helping make birthday's (or other special event days) a special memory for children. Each child will be recognized on his or her birthday in a special Tree House way. If families wish to have your child bring a birthday treat, a non-food item is preferred. Lead teachers can provide families with a list of approved treats. Food from home must be a package item with a nutritional label and nut safe.

**Food Allergies** - Families will complete an Allergy and Asthma Action Plan at the time of enrollment or with the diagnosis of a food related allergy. The plan will be kept within the child's file, in the classroom



and in food preparation areas. A food allergy that requires administration of a medication will need the Allergy and Asthma Action Plan to be signed by the child's medical provider. A note from a medical provider is required and kept in the child's file.

**Allergy sensitive Environment-** contact with some foods could be life threatening to a child with an allergy. The Tree House Child Care Center will do its best to be sensitive to a child's allergies and will partner with families to create an allergy/asthma plan. All families, staff and guests are asked to monitor all foods and products entering the center. Families with a child with a life threatening allergy will need to decide if group care is the most appropriate setting considering not all risks can be fully eliminated. Families with a child with gluten sensitivity, egg, milk and/or shellfish allergies will complete a Food Agreement Plan. The center reserves the right to refuse care if it's felt the child is not safe while in care at the center.

**Infant and Toddler Feeding** - At enrollment, parents will complete a Child Profile with specific details regarding the child's feeding routine. Families will provide feeding supplies (bottles, sippy cups, utensils) ready to feed formula, breast milk and/or meals for babies 6 weeks to 14 months of age or transition to the toddler room. The center will collaborate with families on transitioning children onto solids and to the center's menu as appropriate for the child's development.

Moms who wish to nurse their infant while in the care of The Tree House Child Care Center will be welcomed at any time and provided a designated breastfeeding comfortable space. The Three House follows all licensing regulations for the acceptance, labeling, storing and serving of breast milk to infants.

The Three House Child Care Center provides bibs at meal times for infants and toddlers although families may choose to send bibs with their children. Bibs from home will be returned to families daily. Bibs will be worn only at meal times and will not be left on due to potential strangulation hazards. Pacifiers from home should be labeled using a non-toxic marker only and not with tape, adhesive or any other label. Pacifiers will not be attached to the child at any time. Pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are not allowed.

**Immunization** – Prior to a child under school age starting care at the center, the parent/family must provide the center with one a certificate of immunization showing a minimum of one dose of each immunizing agent specified by the Department of Community Health (DCH) and/or MDHHS (see immunization policy). When a child under school-age whose immunizations were not up to date at the time of enrollment has been in attendance for four months, an updated certificate showing completion off all additional immunization requirements must be on file unless there is a signed statement by a licensed health care provider stating immunizations are in progress. Waivers are not accepted.

**Medical Evaluation** - A medical evaluation documented on the Health Appraisal form is required within 30 days of initial attendance for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. For infants, the physical evaluation must be performed within the preceding 3 months. For toddlers, the physical exam must be performed within the preceding 6 months. For preschoolers the physical exam must be preformed within the preceding year. Physical evaluations must be updated annually (well-child checkups can be considered the annual evaluation). For children enrolled in school age programming, parents/family may upon enrollment and annually thereafter sign a Statement of Good Health.





**Exclusion due to Illness** - If your child appears to be ill upon arrival or becomes ill during the day, you will be asked to pick up your child within the hour. A child who becomes ill during care will be safely isolated within the classroom or the assistant director's office to eliminate exposure while waiting for pick-up. A complete list of contagious illness requiring exclusion from child care can be found in the Exclusion for Illness Policy. Parents/guardians will notify The Tree House Child Care Center by phone by 9:00 a.m. whenever your child is ill informing the center of signs, symptoms and diagnosis. The Tree House Child Care Center asks that families keep a child out of care when the child is experiencing signs of illness. Likewise, The Tree House Child Care Center conducts daily periodic wellness checks to assure children are well enough to remain in care. Safeguarding all children in care is top priority and may result in exclusion from care. See Exclusion for Illness Policy for additional information.

If a child is exposed to a communicable disease, family will be notified by posting within the center and/or through Brightwheel. Confidentiality of those involved will be maintained. If any member of a family enrolled in The Tree House Child Care Center or staff member acquires a communicable disease, the center director should be notified immediately. In the event that a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the director will notify the local health department. A list of communicable diseases is posted on the website.

**Hand Washing** – Hand-washing is the single most effective way to preserve health and reduce the spread of germs and common illnesses. Teachers and staff are trained in proper hand-washing procedures and will model good hand hygiene. Teachers, staff and children will wash hands with soap and water:

- ❖ Upon arrival and before initiating care.
- ❖ Before and after assisting a child with food or drink.
- ❖ Before and after toileting.
- ❖ Before and after assisting a child with toileting.
- ❖ Before and after diapering.
- ❖ Before and after administering a medication.
- ❖ After coming indoors from the outside.
- ❖ After cleaning and handling garbage.

All guests of The Tree House Child Care Center will be asked to use the provided hand sanitizers located throughout the center. Additional precautions may be asked of families and guests during periods of outbreak.

**Cleaning Procedures** – The Tree House Child Care Center cleans, sanitizes and disinfects daily. Staff are trained in hand-washing, general infection control, cleaning procedures, safe food handling, safe diapering procedures and toileting procedures.

The Tree House Child Care Center regularly cleans and sanitizes the center.

- ❖ Equipment and surfaces are wiped down with soap and water followed by a sanitizing disinfectant.
- ❖ Cribs, cots, mats, infant and toddler toys are cleaned daily and as needed throughout the day.
- ❖ Bathrooms, floors and surfaces, doors/door handles are wiped down/cleaned/sanitized daily.



- ❖ Infant room is a “shoeless” environment.
- ❖ Diapering surfaces are sanitized after each use.
- ❖ Surfaces used for food preparation and eating sanitized before and after each use.
- ❖ The center launders using a sanitizing cycle.

## MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

**Medical Records** – A copy of a child’s current physical and medical record and immunizations must be provided at the time of enrollment and on file before a child can begin care The Three House Child Care Center. The file must be updated annually and at the time a new immunization is received.

**Medications** – it is the preference of the center that medications are administered at home, before or after care. If a medication must be dosed at the center, both prescription and over-the-counter medications must be given to the child’s teacher in its original form/container, clearly labeled with the child’s full name and date of birth and with a completed and signed Medication Permission and Instructions Form. Medications will be stored securely while in use at The Tree House Child Care Center with the medication authorization form attached at all times. Medications will be administered to children by the lead teacher, assistant director or designated site lead only. Each administration (dose and time) of medication will be documented on the Medication Permission and Instructions Form and communicated to the family through Brightwheel. Un-used medications will be returned to the family and never stored at the center. Tylenol or any medication indicating “not be given to children under the age of 2 years” will require a signed note from the child’s provider indicating safe to use and specific dosage. The center does not stock or store a general supply of medications for distribution to children or staff.

**Sunscreen** - Families will be asked to provide sunscreen for each child in care and are encouraged to apply sunscreen prior to arriving at The Tree House Child Care Center. A Topical Ointment Application form will be kept within the child’s file. The teachers and staff of The Three House Child Care Center will not apply bug repellent on children. Families are encouraged to apply prior to arrival and in preparation for special outdoor activities. All scheduled walks and field trips will be posted on the center’s calendar of events with reminders communicated through social media and Brightwheel.

**Emergency Medical Procedures** - Any child with a medical care need that may require an emergency response will have an Emergency Medical Care Plan on file at the center and within the classroom. A child with an allergy or asthma that may require an emergency response and/or administration of medication will also have an Allergy and Asthma Action Plan on file. Care plans will be kept within the child’s classroom and emergency readiness kit. All staff and teachers will be required to familiarize themselves with the medical needs of each child. Families may be asked to facilitate the training of staff on individualized emergency response procedures for children with unique needs.

## CARE

**Items from home** – It’s best to keep personal toys and books at home. Teachers may occasionally choose to incorporate special days into the program at which time children may be asked to bring in an





item from home. Children are welcome to keep a small, personal blanket at the center for nap/rest time support. Families should avoid sending bibs with long ties, pacifiers with stuffed animals attached, teething beads, teethingers with strings or ties, scarves and mittens or gloves threaded on a string inside a child's jacket, toys with small parts, barrettes, hair ties, earrings, necklaces and beads which could be a choke hazard.

Children will have a personalized space designated for his or her personal belongings. We encourage families to provide children with a pair of indoor shoes to be worn within the classroom and kept at the center. Children may retrieve a personal comfort item (blanket, stuffed animal, doll, pacifier) for nap/rest time from his or her personal cubby and return once nap or rest time is finished.

**Attire for Outdoor Activity** - At The Tree House Child Care Center, children go outside daily, twice a day (weather permitting) as part of the daily routine of activity. Recommended guidelines will be followed regarding incremental weather and conditions like wind chill factor, heat index, pollen count and lightening will be taken into consideration before going outside. Children should come to the center prepared to go outside. Rain gear, extra hats and mittens and outdoor shoes should be sent with the child. Flip flops and open back shoes are discouraged.

**Diapering** – Infant and toddler diapers will be changed at minimum every 2 hours, upon waking and when soiled or wet. Cloth diapers with waterproof coverings are not used by the center. Baby powder is not allowed or used within the center. Families are asked to provide an adequate supply of diapers, wipes and diaper cream/ointment which will be stored in the child's individualized cubby in close proximity to the diapering area.

**Potty Training** – Toilet learning generally begins around 2 years of age or when the child begins to show physical signs, emotional readiness and interest. The Tree House Child Care Center staff will be responsible for supervising children during toilet learning, being sensitive to the developmental abilities of the child and keeping families informed. The center does not use potty chairs for training. Training toilet seat with steps stools will be used as these items can be more easily cleaned and sanitized. Toilet learning success requires close collaboration and partnership with families. Families will be responsible for informing teachers of the home toileting routine and providing adequate clothing and underwear.

**Rest and Napping** - Children benefit from regular, scheduled periods of rest in the form of napping or quiet, individual activity. Children under school age and in attendance more than 5 continuous hours will be provided nap and/or quiet time. Infants and toddlers will only sleep in cribs or on a nap mat and never in a car seat, swing or non-approved sleep equipment. Nothing is allowed in a crib while the child is sleeping. Infant's over 1 year of age may sleep with a blanket from home. Children under 3 will be provided opportunities to rest regardless of the number of hours in care. Each child over 3 will have an assigned nap mat and sheet. See [Safe Sleep Policy](#) for additional information on napping and safe sleep procedures.

**Discipline Behavior Management** - At The Three House Child Care Center we believe that positive reinforcement and redirection in addition to a well structured and planned environment with talented well trained teachers, will reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviors. Our staff and teachers have the responsibility to guide each child toward positive behaviors. See [Discipline Policy](#) for additional information.



We will:	We will not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Model appropriate behavior.</li> <li>✓ Encourage problem solving and provide guidance.</li> <li>✓ Maintain a consistent behavioral management approach.</li> <li>✓ Modify the environment to support positive behavior.</li> <li>✓ Treat children and all people with respect.</li> <li>✓ Use praise, reward and encouragement to support positive behaviors.</li> <li>✓ Provide alternatives, choices and redirection as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Abuse, endanger, neglect children or utilize cruel, unusual or extreme techniques.</li> <li>✓ Utilize any form of corporal punishment.</li> <li>✓ Use physical restraints.</li> <li>✓ Retaliate or reciprocate a negative behavior.</li> <li>✓ Confine children in a place or with equipment.</li> <li>✓ Humiliate, threaten, frighten or verbally abuse.</li> <li>✓ Use punishment for failure to eat, sleep or toileting accidents.</li> <li>✓ Withhold food.</li> <li>✓ Isolate or restrict a child from activities.</li> <li>✓ Hold a group of children responsible for the behavior of one.</li> </ul>

Should a child's behavioral escalate or for the safety of the child and others, the staff or property of The Tree House Child Care Center will:

- Work to calm and redirect the child.
- Engage families in a co-created behavior plan.
- Communicate transparently with families.
- Seek additional community resources for support such as social emotional consultation.

**Biting** – Although biting is considered a normal part of child development, it is unacceptable in a child care center. If a child should express him or herself through biting, the staff will calmly and firmly stop the child from biting and remove the child from the situation. A child who has been bitten will have the bite washed with soap and water, a cold compress applied and a bandage if necessary. An incident report will be completed. It is important for teachers and families to monitor and discuss the reasons why biting may be occurring and to identify triggers that can be avoided. Should a child bite more than one occasion in a single day, the child must be picked up from the center by an approved pick- up person within an hour. If a child is sent home more than two times in a week for biting, The Tree House Child Care Center will suspend the child from care at the normal tuition rate until the biting behavior has subsided. Continued biting after suspension may be cause for disenrollment at the discretion of the director.

#### **Behavior Guidelines for older students and school agers:**

- ❖ Respect self, other campers, staff and property of The Tree House.
- ❖ Demonstrate healthy behaviors and not intentionally jeopardize the health of others.
- ❖ No bullying or violence of any kind. Act responsibly, respectfully, kindly and with honesty.
- ❖ Share any concerns or need for assistance with staff.
- ❖ Participate in activities and not disrupt the program or the experience of others.

**Bullying Policy** - The Tree House Child Care Center has a zero tolerance bullying policy. Students are expected to treat other students and Tree House staff with respect at all times. Parents will be called to assist should a student not be able to abide by this expectation.



**Incidents** – An Incident Report will be completed for a child involved in an accident, resulting in an injury requiring medical attention. The state licensing consultant will be contacted within 24 hours of a situation that involved a child receiving medical attention. The confidentiality of all involved children and families will be maintained. We will not reveal the identity of a child who has engaged in an aggressive act against another, even at the request of the parent/guardian of the targeted child. Families will receive a copy of any incident report. See Parent Notification of Accident, Injury or Illness Policy for additional information.

**Notification of Licensing Book** - PARENT NOTIFICATION OF THE LICENSING NOTEBOOK Child Care Organizations Act, 1973 Public Act 116 Michigan Department of Human Services states all child care centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP). The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPs developed on and after May 27, 2010 until the license is closed.

- ❖ This center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans.
- ❖ The notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours.
- ❖ Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).



**The Tree House Child Care Center** ("School") and the undersigned parents ("Parents"), by entering into this tuition agreement to enroll their child listed below ("Student") for early education services, executed by the parents on the signed date below, agree as follows:

1. **Consent:** This agreement is entered into with mutual consent of Parents and the School.
2. **Enrollment deposit:** The School requires a non-refundable registration fee and two week tuition enrollment deposit ("Deposit") to reserve a spot in care. The tuition deposit is credited towards payment of tuition or fees following the child's admission date (first date of care).
3. **Tuition and charges:** Parents agree to pay the full amount for tuition and fees. The center reserves the right to amend the fee policy. Tuition is billed in 4 week increments through an automatic fund transfer. Tuition is based on room rate and schedule.
4. **Late fees:** Parents understand and agree that a \$35 insufficient fund fee will be assessed for each business day that payment is not current billed and payable through a third party designated by the school.
5. **Additional fees:** Parents agree that additional fees (lost badge fee, waitlist fee, late pick up fee) may be charged. Additional fees are due when charged and will be billed and payable through a third party designated by the school.
6. **Payment obligation:** Parents have an individual and joint obligation to pay all tuition and fees under this agreement. Parents' failure to pay any amount when due pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, may, at the School's sole discretion, result in the suspension or dismissal of the Student from the School. Parents shall pay any costs and attorney's fees the School incurs in collection of Parents' outstanding balance.
7. **Early withdrawal:** Parents must provide at least two week signed WRITTEN NOTICE to the Head of School to withdraw the Student from the School. Tuition will be collected during the notice period, and after the notice period, Parents will no longer be responsible for tuition payments pursuant to this Agreement. Notification periods begin ONLY the first or third Monday of the 4 week period.
8. **Payment agreement:** Parents understand and agree that, regardless of Student's absence, illness, vacation, holiday or unanticipated closure, Parents remain obligated to pay the amount of tuition set forth in the Agreement.

This tuition agreement is individualized. Confidentiality is expected from both the parties

Enrollment fee \_\_\_\_\_

Day rate \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly tuition \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling discount \_\_\_\_\_

Tuition draft (4 weeks) \_\_\_\_\_

Days of the Week: Mon. Tues. Wed. Thur. Fri.

Enrollment deposit \_\_\_\_\_

*Non-refundable*

This agreement must be reviewed annually, a room transition or move from part to full time or vice versa.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of director (Head of School)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Total Weekly Tuition	Total Tuition Draft every 4 weeks
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NOTES:



## Family Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that the Family Handbook for The Tree House Child Care Center has outlined its duties and responsibilities as well as mine of parent/guardian of a child enrolled in care. I understand that The Tree House Child Care Center has the right to amend the policies and procedures within this handbook at anytime. I acknowledge I have received the Family Handbook and agree to abide by all policies within. We sincerely appreciate your support and interest in our program and look forward to the partnership.

A written information packet has been provided at the time of enrollment. The packet included all the following information:

- ❖ Admission and Withdrawal policy
- ❖ Discipline policy
- ❖ Program philosophy
- ❖ Typical daily routine
- ❖ Emergency procedure policy
- ❖ Reporting child abuse or neglect policy
- ❖ Parent notification plan for accidents, injuries, incidents, illnesses
- ❖ Notice of the availability of the center's licensing notebook.
- ❖ Fee policy
- ❖ Food Service policy
- ❖ Schedule of operations.
- ❖ Exclusion for illness policy
- ❖ Supervision of volunteers policy
- ❖ Notification of licensure book

I certify that I received and reviewed all of the above items.

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Signature of the Director

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Date

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Signature of the Parent/Guardian

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Date