



Everything you need to know about **THE PRESCHOOL TWO GROUP** at the Children's Greenhouse!



Welcome to the Preschool Two Group! Please take the time to read these few pages of information that will help give you a basic understanding of the Preschool Two Group. Thank you!

CHILDREN

At the time of enrollment, the ages of children in the Preschool Two Group can range from approximately 3 years 8 months to 5 years.

STAFF

There is a **HEAD CAREGIVER**, a full time employee, who is responsible for the overall operation of the group. The head caregiver makes sure that the group's activities run efficiently and is the one who plans the activities around the center's curriculum themes. There is also a full time **HEAD ASSISTANT CAREGIVER** who works with the head caregiver in all aspects of the program and whose responsibility it is to ensure a smooth transition when the head caregiver leaves for the day. We encourage you to address questions or concerns to these primary caregivers. Together, with full and part time assistants, they form a team who supervise the children and who interact with them during activities and routines.

There is a ratio of one caregiver for every five children. This enables us to provide a good deal of attention to the individual needs of each child.

CLASSROOM AREAS

Parents and children enter the Preschool Two room through a door from the preschool gym. For active play time, the Preschool Two Group shares this gym area with the Preschool One Group. The Preschool Two bathroom is unique in that it has short stalls that provide the children with privacy but allow caregivers to assist when necessary. There is a refrigerator, where lunches and snack foods are stored, and a small kitchen area with a microwave.

DAILY ROUTINES

The goal of the Preschool Two Group is to provide for the needs of each child in our care. There is a daily schedule that includes time for playing and learning as well as for routine activities. A copy of this schedule is on the last page of this packet and a copy is posted in the room. In addition, staff spends time helping children to reach developmental milestones through planned and improvised activities.

You may choose to receive a written summary of your child's day by filling out the top portion of a **DAILY DETAILS** form at arrival time. Each parent should complete a **PRESCHOOL TWO INTAKE FORM** when your child starts in our program and at any time that there are significant changes in eating, sleeping, health needs, etc. The Intake Form gives caregivers an overview of your child and is something they will refer to periodically for guidance.

BEHAVIOR

Children test their limits on a daily basis! Anticipating this, our staff plans a daily schedule and activities that are age-appropriate and designed to keep the children engaged. There are rules that are discussed and toys and supplies are plentiful to ensure that the children are playing happily throughout the day.

If a child engages in inappropriate behavior that is within the norm, caregivers will help the child through the situation by discussing it with them. If a child hurts another child, we encourage conversation that helps both children to understand that it is not acceptable. If a child needs a moment, a staff member will provide a calming activity and will stay with the child until all is well.

ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING

Children in Preschool Two are learning every minute of the day. They learn from the way we organize the room, from the daily schedule and from activities and when they play outdoors.

The Preschool Two room is set up for learning. Children have many opportunities to make choices, come up with ideas, experiment, and take responsibility for their work. Here's what you see when you visit the Preschool Two room:

- The children have cubbies, labeled with their names and photos. Their jackets, coats, change of clothing, etc. are kept in the cubbies.
- Each child also has a mailbox where you will find artwork and notices from the office.
- Materials are on low shelves, in containers, so children can get them independently and put them away.
- Shelves are neat and uncluttered so materials are easy to see, remove, and replace.
- Picture and word labels are on containers and shelves so children know where materials belong and learn to identify words.
- There are distinct interest centers--blocks, dramatic play, reading, math, writing, toys and games, art, discovery, library, sand and water, music and movement, and different play spaces outdoors--so children know what choices are available and make decisions.
- A variety of learning materials are in each area so that no matter where children choose to play, they learn.
- Similar materials are grouped together to teach children to sort and classify; skills that are important to understanding and solving math problems.

We want your child to feel secure and independent, to move from one activity to another as easily and confidently as possible and we want to provide a variety of learning experiences for a well-rounded education. Therefore, the daily schedule is planned with these goals in mind. We follow this same schedule day after day. After a few weeks, the children can tell us what they are supposed to do next!

Caregivers plan a variety of activities for the children each day and each day also includes opportunities for the children to learn how to express themselves, to play and share with one or several friends, to learn self-help skills and to learn to follow simple group rules.

Weather permitting, the Preschool Two Group goes outdoors to the playground each day to climb, ride on bikes and scooters, dig in the sand and play with outdoor toys. The group will occasionally go for walks to enjoy the sights and sounds of the campus. On rainy or very cold days, the group will use the indoor gym area for active play.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum in Preschool Two is planned to build the foundation of learning that the children will need to be prepared for kindergarten, with the emphasis on making learning fun. A typical Preschool Two day consists of play and learning opportunities including *Team Time* in the morning and again in the afternoon. Each team consists of several children and one or two caregivers. Teams are represented by a color and each child is given a rubber bracelet to designate which team they are on. Separating into these smaller groups gives the children an opportunity to form new friendships and to explore a variety of activities in depth. Having teams also gives the staff an opportunity to spend time with small groups and helps them to focus on a child's particular strengths or on areas that need help.

These are some examples of teams and team time activities:

- DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER – dramatic play is all about allowing children to use their imagination to come up with ways to role-play and portray life experiences, the possibilities are literally endless! We supply many props and supplies that allow all kinds of pretend play.
- ART CENTER - the children can be creative with a variety of art materials including paint, glue, crayons, markers and scissors that help develop eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills. Monthly curriculum themes and weekly topics are incorporated into our learning centers and our art experiences often culminate in some special curriculum related project.
- MANIPULATIVE CENTER - allows the children time to use puzzles and to play with toys like Legos that encourage problem solving skills and the development of fine motor skills.
- DISCOVERY CENTER - allows the children explore science materials such as magnets, magnifying glasses and microscopes.
- MATH CENTER - sorting and counting games help lay the foundation for learning math concepts.
- TABLET COMPUTER CENTER – the iPads have applications that encourage pre-reading skills, math skills and creative abilities.
- WRITING CENTER - the children practice pre-writing skills by tracing the letters, talking about their sounds and playing board games that have them match uppercase to lowercase letters. To extend the learning process to home, we provide copies of practice letter and number writing sheets for those who would like them.

Children starting kindergarten in the fall of the coming year will be part of the *Kindergarten Readiness Team*. Each of these children will have a minimum of two sessions per week on this team, based on their Greenhouse schedules. Activities for this team include but are not limited to working on letter and number recognition, practicing letter and number writing, basic math, pre-reading skills and self-help skills.

Along with team time and the many other activities that take place during a typical day, circle time is an important learning time. The children gather in the circle area to sing, dance and to discuss curriculum topics. They learn the calendar, months of the year and days of the week, and they talk about the seasons and the daily weather.

ASSESSMENTS AND CONFERENCES

Over the course of a semester, the head caregiver will conduct assessments to determine that each child in the program is reaching age-appropriate developmental milestones. These assessments will be used to provide parents with information about their child's development during parent/caregiver conferences and to assist staff in planning programmatic activities that meet the developmental needs of each child. Sample forms may be viewed in the office.

Individual meetings with caregivers are offered at the end of the Fall and Spring Semesters. Notice of meeting dates will be given, prior to the end of the semester, and parents may choose a meeting day and time that is convenient.

This opportunity to meet with your child's caregiver is very valuable because it will give you an opportunity to privately discuss your child's progress and development and to review assessment materials. You may also request a meeting with your child's caregiver at any time during the year if you have the need to discuss any issues involving your child or if you would like to receive a developmental progress report.

MEALS

If your child is scheduled to be at the center during lunch times, you are responsible for providing lunch. Our license to operate requires that we monitor the children's food intake for nutritional value – this includes lunch and snacks, which are provided by the Greenhouse. Based on this requirement these are some basic rules that everyone should follow:

PLEASE DO NOT SEND:

- X HIGHLY SUGARED, SALTED OR ARTIFICIALLY FLAVORED OR COLORED FOODS*
- X CANDY, GUM, CHEESE DOODLES OR CHIPS OF ANY KIND*
- X CHOCOLATE IN ANY FORM (COOKIES, CANDY, GRANOLA BARS, ETC.)*
- X PRE-PACKAGED FOODS (SUCH AS LUNCH BUCKETS OR FROZEN FOODS)*
- X FAST FOODS OF ANY KIND (THIS INCLUDES MC DONALDS AND BURGER KING)*
- X HIGHLY SWEETENED CEREALS (NO FRUIT LOOPS, TRIX, ETC.)*

PLEASE DO SEND:

- ✓ MILK OR 100% FRUIT JUICE AS A BEVERAGE WITH MEALS. When possible, juice should be diluted.*
- ✓ A LUNCH THAT PROVIDES SEVERAL APPROPRIATE FOOD CHOICES.*

LUNCH GUIDELINES

Imagine having to serve any meal or snack to several tables full of hungry young children! At the Greenhouse that goes on several times a day and it is the goal of our staff to make these times as enjoyable as possible for the children. So that the caregivers may devote more direct attention to the children we ask you to follow these simple guidelines:

- Lunches that contain food to be served warm should be placed in the refrigerator and will be warmed by our staff.
- Lunches should contain a variety of food, including fruit and a simple snack or dessert.
- Lunches should include a beverage.
- Pre-packaged drinks, applesauce, fruit cups and puddings are occasionally wasted because the children only eat small amounts and the remainder cannot be put into a lunch box.
- Please cut all food into bite-sized pieces; this includes peeling, pitting and slicing fruits, including grapes. *Please do not send in any meat on bones.*
- You may send peanut butter sandwiches.
- Some suggested lunch items are: *sandwiches, yogurt, rolled up cold cuts, cold meats, pieces of cheese, raw or slightly cooked vegetables, cheese and crackers, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, cut up apples, pears, oranges or any fruit cut up, graham crackers, vanilla wafers, animal crackers or other plain cookies.*
- **Any uneaten lunch items will be returned to you in your child's lunch box.**
- **SPECIAL FOOD NEEDS** – health or allergy related, nutritional, religious, or cultural, will be accommodated. The most important factor in special situations is to discuss these needs with administrators and caregivers.

In the event that you forget to bring a lunch for your child, don't panic! We keep some lunch foods on hand just for this type of emergency. Please stop in the office and we will gladly assist you when this situation occurs.

FOOD SAFETY

We need your help! As you prepare your child's lunch for the Greenhouse, there are some simple things that we would like you to do to ensure that the food you pack is not a choking hazard:

- ✓ All firm food, including meat, fruit, cheese, and raw vegetables, must be cut into pieces that are no bigger than ½ inch.

These are examples of the size food pieces should be:



- When you send grapes – please cut them in 4 pieces.
- When you send hot dogs – please cut them in half lengthwise and then in small pieces.
- When preparing chicken or any meat, please remove all bones and skin and cut in small pieces.
- ✓ If you send peanut butter for lunch, please spread a thin layer on bread or crackers.
- ✓ Please do not send raisins or fruit snacks for children less than 4 years of age.
- ✓ Please do not send nuts or popcorn as a snack for any child.
- ✓ THANK YOU and as always, please speak with caregivers if you have any questions or if your child has any special needs regarding food.

MEAL SCHEDULES

In addition to lunches that come from home, snacks are provided for the children three times per day.

- **Breakfast** – if you would like, you may send in breakfast from home. It will be served to your child at morning snack time or if you are scheduled to arrive before 8:30 AM, it will be served when your child arrives.
- **Morning Snack** – is an alternative breakfast which consists of a variety of nutritious foods and is served at approximately 9:30 AM.
- **Lunch** – is served at approximately 12:30 PM but if a child does not eat well, they are offered lunch again at afternoon snack time.
- **Afternoon Snack** - is served at 2:45 PM and this is also when lunch will be served again for those children who did not eat well earlier.
- **Late Afternoon Snack** – a light snack is served at approximately 4:40 PM.
- **Beverages** – the children are offered 1% milk or water as a beverage with all snacks. Occasionally we may serve some variety of 100% fruit juice which will be diluted with water.

**Please refer to the SNACK MENU, posted on the side of the refrigerator,
for details about what is being served each day.**

SLEEPING

Parents give staff guidance as to whether or not their child should nap. Provisions will be made for children in this group who need a nap and a caregiver will sit with children while they are going to sleep and will remain in the area with the sleeping children.

SUPPLIES

Please bring these items to the Greenhouse for your child and please write your child's name on each item:

- One change of clothing that includes a shirt, pants, undershirt, underwear and socks.
- A sweater or sweatshirt just in case it's cool in the building.
- For children who may not be completely toilet trained, please bring in extra changes of clothing along with extra underwear.
- For children in diapers or pull-ups, please bring in a supply of diapers or pull-ups and wipes. Children will be changed in the Preschool One bathroom where there are changing tables.
- A light blanket for sleeping; we will provide the sheets and will launder them after use. Blankets will also be laundered weekly at the Greenhouse.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. **MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS**

Each child at the center is required to have an annual, complete physical examination, signed and dated by a physician and recorded on DSS Form 4433 (which are available in the Greenhouse office). In addition, please keep us informed when your child's immunizations have been updated by bringing in a printout or note stamped by your health care provider.

2. **MEDICATION**

If your child needs to have any type of medication while they are at the center, you must stop in the office and speak with administrators who will provide you with the appropriate permission forms.

* *Please refer the handbook for more detailed information on these topics.*

SUMMER SESSIONS

- **SCHEDULE:** The daily schedule of activities and routines will be adjusted in the summer. Parents will receive the summer schedule at the start of the session their child is attending.
- **CLOTHING:** Children who are enrolled during the summer months of July and August should bring a bathing suit, a towel, and water shoes so that they can fully participate in the fun of our sprinkler and outdoor water play.
- **SUNBLOCK:** We provide sunblock for the children and apply it prior to going outdoors. Parents may choose to supply their own product which we will keep on hand to use prior to outdoor activities. Parents will be asked to sign a form giving us permission to apply sunblock.

GRADUATION

At the end of the Spring Semester, a special graduation ceremony is held for those children who are leaving the Children's Greenhouse for kindergarten or other preschool programs. The date and time of this event is announced early in the Spring Semester so that parents can keep the date available.

We have special caps and gowns for the children to wear and they will perform several of their favorite songs during the ceremony. Graduation is held in the early evening and is followed by a party at the Greenhouse and all family members are welcome!

IN CLOSING

We want your time in the Preschool Two Group to be a positive experience for your child and for you. At any time, please do not hesitate to ask the caregivers questions and to speak with administrators if you have concerns about your child or about the program.

Sample Preschool Two Schedule

FOR FALL AND SPRING SEMESTERS

(This schedule may vary based on the needs of the group.)

7:30	Breakfast
8:00	Centers and Creative Art
9:15	Clean up - Bathroom Time
9:30	Snack Time
9:50	Book Time
10:00	Circle Time
10:30	Team Time
11:35	Clean up - Bathroom Time
11:45	Outdoor Play/Gym Time
12:15	Story Time
12:30	Lunch
1:00	Centers and Creative Art
	Nap time
2:00	Circle Time
2:30	Clean Up - Bathroom Time
2:45	Snack Time
3:00	Team Time
3:30	Outdoor Play/Gym Time
4:00	Creative Art
4:25	Clean up - Bathroom Time
4:40	Light Snack
5:00	Free Play - Centers



CLASSROOM CENTERS

Used for Free Play and Team Time:

- Art
- Blocks
- Discovery
- Dramatic Play
- Easel painting
- iPads
- Manipulatives
- Math
- Playdough or Gak
- Puzzles
- Quiet Learning
- Table Games
- Water and Sand Table
- Writing and Drawing

