

Parent Handbook



1558 South County Trail East Greenwich, R.I. 02818

(401) 885-2132

barbaramtufts@gmail.com

www.barbaramtufts.org

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Welcome to the Barbara M. Tufts Co-op Preschool! We look forward to a great year of learning adventures with your children and you. Please use this parent handbook as a resource as we work together as a team this year to give your children a high-quality preschool experience that will serve as a door to their future educational journeys.

Mission Statement

The Barbara M. Tufts Preschool (BMTCP) was established as an ecumenical venture of the East Greenwich faith communities. Our goal from the start has been to provide a developmentally appropriate, high-quality preschool experience with openness to each child's individuality, regardless of gender, family origins, economic situation, or religious affiliation.

In keeping with the original vision, the East Greenwich United Methodist Church provides classroom space at no cost to the school, so that we may offer tuition on a sliding scale and no child is ever denied access for financial reasons. We are a Bright Star rated 501 C3 cooperative preschool working together with families to provide opportunities for children to make choices, solve problems, build relationships, and celebrate their their individuality.

A day at the BMTCP finds children exploring a carefully planned environment, reflecting their interests. We provide a well-rounded program for three, four, and five-year old's, based on the Rhode Island Early Learning and Developmental Standards (RIELDS). Experiences and materials nurture cognitive growth, emotional well-being, fine and gross motor skills, language development, literacy, math, science and social studies, creative arts as well as self-care skills. At the BMTCP, we strive to respond to the individual needs and interests of each child. Our program offers opportunities for your child to make choices and decisions while learning through play-based, developmentally appropriate activities. Parents are a child's best teacher and an integral part of our team.

Staff

Education Coordinator/Director:

Lisa Wesson, (401) 524-7414, lw154@cox.net

Office Administrator:

Heather Donoyan, (401) 885-2132, barbaramtufts@gmail.com

Head Teachers:

Lisa Wesson (*Super Threes, Fantastic Fours*), (401) 524-7414, lw154@cox.net

Heather Bristol (*Fall Fives*), (401) 575-8364, hogan__bristol@yahoo.com

Classroom Assistants:

Super Threes:

Ms. Nanny (Ann Marie Suffeletto)

Fantastic Fours:

Ms. Nanny (Ann Marie Suffeletto)

Fall Fives:

Ms. Marilyn Rodriguez (Mondays and Wednesdays),

Ms. Hannah Henry Haas (Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Class Schedules:

Super Threes:

Tuesday, Thursday 8:30-11:30 am

Fantastic Fours:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30-12:30 pm

Fall Fives:

Monday-Thursday 9:00-1:00 pm

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Classes will begin and end at staggered times. Cars will form a line along the sidewalk, and children will be dropped off one car at a time at the door. There will be a staff member designated to come out to your car with the sign-in/out sheet and accompany your child into the building. Your signature attests that your child is symptom-free and healthy to attend school that day. The child will be given hand sanitizer before they enter the building with a staff member and will immediately stop at the bathroom to thoroughly wash their hands for 20 seconds before entering the classroom.

Pick-up will be done in the same manner, your child will be accompanied to your car at the end of the day, and you will sign them out. Pick-up may occur at the same door as drop-off or at the playground gate.

Late Policy

Parents and caregivers are expected to pick up their children in a timely manner. We understand that emergencies happen and that circumstances may occur that cause you to be late in picking up your child. We ask that you please call the school and let us know when/if this happens. If we do not receive a call or this becomes a chronic problem, you will be assessed a \$5 charge for every 15 minutes you are late.

Cleaning and Sanitization

A cleaning schedule is posted in each classroom. We will add a daily checklist so staff can initial and time stamp when the cleaning has been done throughout the day. Cleaners used will be on the EPA-approved list for COVID. During this time, these procedures will be intensified and will include extra cleaning of all high-touch surfaces. Door and cabinet handles will be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each day. Floors will be swept and mopped at the end of each day. Tables and chairs will be cleaned and sanitized between each group of children using them. Manipulatives and materials that are not able to be sanitized will be removed from all classrooms. Cloth toys will not be used at this time. Manipulatives will either be put through a Sani cycle of a dishwasher daily (if possible) or cleaned and sanitized by hand. Materials will not be shared between classrooms. Plastic paint smocks will be wiped down between children and will be laundered weekly. Dress-up clothes will be laundered weekly.

Each child will have their own individual toolbox clearly labeled with their name which will contain classroom tools (i.e. markers, crayons, scissors, glue) for their exclusive use. These will be wiped down at the end of the day. Children will each have their own individual containers of playdough and/or kinetic sand.

Staff and children's bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized thoroughly each morning before the children arrive. Each class will be assigned a bathroom for their exclusive use to prevent cross-contamination. Toilets, sinks, and door handles will be wiped down after use with antibacterial wipes and sprayed with Lysol. Another thorough cleaning will take place at the end of the school day.

Handwashing Guidelines

All children and staff will engage in consistent and regular hand hygiene. Hands will be washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be used when washing is not feasible and when hands are not visibly dirty. Staff will supervise children closely with hand sanitizer. Handwashing posters will be hung in bathrooms and classrooms. Children will sing the alphabet song and a timer will be available to ensure 20 seconds have passed. In the morning at drop off after a child is screened for illness, they will use hand sanitizer before entering the building. Staff will take children immediately into their class bathroom to wash their hands before they enter the classroom. Children and staff will wash their hands prior to snack and lunch. They will wash their hands upon reentering the building from the playground or outside learning. Hands will always be washed after encountering bodily fluids. Children and staff will wash their hands after toileting.

Classroom Supervision

Student/teacher ratios follow DCYF regulations and are posted in each classroom according to age group. Parent volunteers are not considered part of the ratio but, as a cooperative, we count on your help in the classroom. The DCYF maximum Staff/Child Ratios are as follows: Preschool 3-1:9, max group size 18; Preschool 4-1:10, max group size 20; Preschool 5/6- 1:12, max group size 24.

Daily Schedule

Routine and predictability are important as children learn to navigate life. At the BMTCP, free choice is available through a carefully structured morning schedule. All classes follow a daily schedule in one classroom, with time for outside activities on our playground or the church grounds. The daily schedule is posted in the classroom. Each classroom includes centers that enhance our curriculum and are structured around the RIELDS. Dramatic play, art, fine and sensory-motor activities, math, writing, “Book Nook”, science, and block centers have all been carefully arranged within each classroom. Our playground is located right outside our building bringing the learning and centers into the outdoors. The IWOC, or Invisible Wall Outdoor Classroom, is located down at and adjacent to the lower parking lot. During their time on the IWOC, children have an opportunity to participate in a variety of science and gross motor activities while exploring the natural world around them.

Clothing

Please send your children to school in clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for crawling, climbing, painting, pasting, and getting messy. Crocs and flip-flops, while fashionable, are not safe for outdoor play. We supply smocks for messy activities and use washable supplies but sometimes even these products stain clothes. Please label your child’s outerwear with their name. We spend a lot of time outdoors so please dress your child with the weather in mind. Hats and mittens are a must during cold weather months. Hats will not be provided due to DCYF regulations. Every child must have a complete change of clothing in their backpack.

Lunch and/or Snack

Please send a clearly labeled lunch box with your child’s lunch and or snack inside. We ask that you send healthy choices that are nutritionally balanced. If you are sending both lunch and snack, please make sure they are clearly labeled so staff knows which is which. All food sent in must be nut free. Label all water bottles and drinks clearly with your child’s name. There is always water available inside and out for children to drink any time they are thirsty.

School Cancellations

Any school cancellation notices will be listed with the State of R.I. Broadcasters Association. Look for the Barbara M. Tufts Cooperative Preschool on broadcasters' closing notices. Make-up days are at the discretion of the Board of Directors and the Education Coordinator. As always, we ask you to use your own judgment; if you feel roads are unsafe, then please keep your child home. Your family's safety is what is most important.

Registration

Registration for in-house families is held the January before the next school year. Once we have families who are currently attending or whose children have attended in the past registered, we will open registration to new families. There is a \$200 nonrefundable/nontransferable registration fee required at the time of registration. Once you have your tuition contract finalized, \$150 of this fee will be applied toward your child's tuition.

Forms

All state physical forms (from your pediatrician's office) and Department of Human Services Forms MUST be on file the first day of school. All necessary forms have been emailed to families.

Tuition

Tuition at the BMTCP is on a sliding scale. It is determined by income and individual circumstances. Proof of income in the form of your current tax return is required unless you opt to pay full tuition. This information is kept strictly confidential between you and the school administrator; no other staff or families have access to any financial information. Any family who is not paying full tuition is in fact receiving a scholarship; this differs by family and economic situation. Please respect this confidentiality. We ask that you keep your tuition information between your family and the school administrator. This must be brought to the Office Administrator by the first week of school if it wasn't calculated at the time of registration. The total tuition for the year is your weekly tuition x 34 weeks. We offer a 10% discount if you have more than one child enrolled in school.

Even if your child is absent, payment is required; school vacation weeks are not included in the 34 weeks. Tuition is due the first week of every month, a \$30 supply charge should be added to your first month's tuition. The sliding scale provides scholarships to families who need it. We provide these scholarships through the generosity of the East Greenwich United Methodist Church, parent help, and various fundraisers held throughout the year, the main event being our annual May Fair. Tuition that is not paid in full by the end of the school year will be subject to collection proceedings unless arrangements for payment are made with the office administrator for a definite payment schedule. Returning families who are not making regular payments and have unpaid balances will not be permitted to register for the following school year. If your check is returned by the bank for insufficient funds, you are responsible for paying any banking fees assessed. School policy requires that, after two returned checks, families must make future payments in cash or by certified bank check.

Withdrawing

At times due to relocation or a change in life circumstances, families may need to leave school before the end of the year. We certainly understand but require that you please notify our office administrator 30 days in advance of leaving. This ensures a smooth transition for your child and his/her peers and allows any clerical concerns to be taken care of before your departure.

Telephone Messages

The school phone number is 885-2132. If it is important for you to reach us during school hours, please call and leave a message with the Office Administrator. If your child will be absent, please call prior to class starting.

Family Communication

A weekly school newsletter will be e-mailed to you on Sunday evenings. If you are not receiving these e-mails, please speak to the office, and we will ensure your e-mail is correct on our list. The school also has a Facebook page with information. Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. If you would like to address something with your child's teacher at any time, please e-mail them or call to request a time outside of classroom hours to talk. Communication is our top priority and key to your child having a successful year at the BMTCP.

Conferences

We schedule two formal conferences with parents during the school year. This year's conference days will be Monday, November 21, 2022, and Thursday, April 6, 2023. The first will be an informal time to talk about how your child is adapting to the classroom and to answer any questions you may have. The second will be a more formal conference; assessments of your child's progress will be discussed. Classes will not meet on conference days. Your child's teacher sends a sign-up genius for a 15-minute time slot prior to conference day. If you have a need for a conference before then, please arrange this with your child's teacher. Children, parents, and teachers reap the benefits of good communication, so please feel free to reach out via e-mail or phone call at any time during the year.

Health and Safety

R.I. State Law Regarding Child Abuse and Neglect, Rhode Island requires that "any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect must be reported to the Department of Children Youth and Families by calling 1-800-RI-CHILD." If the staff at the BMTCP has any reason to believe that a child is being or has been abused or neglected, we will, as required by law, report the information to DCYF.

R.I. law states that children under the age of 7 should not be left alone in a car or elsewhere, and children also must use appropriate car seats.

There is no smoking allowed anywhere on the school grounds, including the parking lot. This will be strictly enforced for the health and safety of all.

Staff will not give medicine to children when in school, except for children who have severe allergies and have a clearly labeled prescription for an epi-pen with explicit instructions for use provided by their physician. Benadryl may also be administered under these circumstances. All staff is required to learn the proper use of an epi-pen with a practice injector. Epi-pens will be stored in a safe, clearly labeled container in the room in which the child has a snack and/or lunch. An allergy action form with the child's picture, known allergens, and emergency procedure if the child encounters an allergen will be in the emergency backpack and in the child's file in the office.

In the rare case of custody disputes involving restraining orders, please remember that all current court documents must be given promptly to the office administrator, and the child's classroom teacher needs to be notified. Legally, we need to be in possession of the documents so that we may follow the court order. We reserve the right to make decisions concerning custody disputes based on the safety of all the children attending school.

Covid Guidelines

There will be a designated isolation room in the event a child becomes ill during the school day. This room will not be used for any other reason during our school day. We will have a cot, thermometer, first aid kit, phone, emergency forms for every child enrolled, gloves, and hand sanitizer available in this room. If a child is sick during the day, the child's emergency contact will be called, and the child will be escorted to the door by a staff member upon their arrival. The room will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized once the child is safe with their caregiver. In the case of an emergency, we will call 911, as well as you, and a trained staff member will administer first aid or CPR until EMTs arrive.

If Covid-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member we will follow the current guidance provided to us by the RI Department of Health and Department of Human Services.

Curriculum

The curriculum at the BMTCP is literacy and theme based planned in accordance with the RIELDS. It is developed with the interests of the children in mind. Learning opportunities through play are created with the Rhode Island Early Learning Developmental Standards as a framework. The nine domains of the RIELDS are physical and motor development; social and emotional development; language; literacy; cognitive development; mathematics; science; social studies; and creative arts. Activities are woven into the curriculum with particular attention to children's developmental levels. We seek to build self-esteem through communication, planning, responsibility, problem-solving, participation, following directions, imagination, and sharing within the group. Children develop skills through collaboration, compromise, self-expression, and respect for each other through group dialogue. Open-ended activities and materials are available to allow children to work at their own pace and to make choices independently and cooperatively in both small and large groups.

Behavior and Classroom Management

BMTCP is a preschool devoted to the healthy development of the whole child. We regard challenges, conflict, and disagreement as appropriate components of child development. At BMTCP, positive verbal reinforcement and role modeling are used to encourage appropriate behavior. Reinforcing a child's positive self-image through praise encourages good decision-making and serves as a good example for other children in the class to follow. Children are encouraged to use their own words to work out problems with their peers, with teacher guidance when necessary. Role-playing allows children to understand how others may be feeling. Redirection serves as a positive way to diffuse a negative situation. If an issue persists, a child is taken away from the problem, not as a time out, but rather as a time to calm down, regroup, and rethink their decisions. When the child is ready, they may rejoin the group with appropriate behavior. Corporal punishment is not tolerated and is grounds for immediate staff dismissal. Under no circumstances do we associate consequences with food, playground time, or toileting.

If a child is having repeated difficulties with certain behaviors that are disruptive to or endangering other children in the class, a conference will be held with the family. Families will be asked to provide suggestions for behavior modifications based on their experiences at home. Working together as a team, teachers and families will come up with a plan of action to help the child with their difficult behavior.

Birthdays

This year, parents may send in individually wrapped, store-bought treats for children to share with the class. Please talk to your child's teacher about which day closest to your child's birthday will be best to celebrate.

Paper Good of the Month

In order to keep expenses down and tuition affordable, we have established a Paper Good of the Month donation. Every month, you will get an e-mail requesting a donation of some type of paper good. Some months we need paper towels, tissues, or cleaning products. We ask every family to donate a package of the paper good requested each month.

Fundraisers

We will hold a variety of fundraisers throughout the year. This year we are in the process of forming a parent fundraising committee. Please e-mail the school at barbaramtufts@gmail.com and let us know if you are interested.

Scholastic Books

This book club offers great books at lower than bookstore prices. This year, we are going to offer Scholastic Books strictly online. You can go to the Scholastic website and use this class code: HJR6N to place your order. If it asks for a teacher's name, please click on Heather Donoyan. If you order through BMTCP, we can use points to purchase books for our school.

Program Evaluations

Toward the end of the school year, we have an online survey available for parents to provide us with feedback which allows us to plan and grow for the future. If at any time during the year, you have suggestions, thoughts, or concerns please speak with your child's classroom teacher or with Ms. Lisa, our education coordinator.