

# **THE GROWING STICK LEARNING CENTER**

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**"WHERE EVERY CHILD IS OUR MOST PRECIOUS  
RESOURCE"**

**2700 Willard Dr.**

**Tyler, TX. 75703**

**903-534-0601**

**[www.growingstick.com](http://www.growingstick.com)**

# PARENT POLICY HANDBOOK

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**SCHOOL HOURS: MONDAY – FRIDAY - 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.**

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**

To provide excellence in early childhood education in a loving environment, enabling the child to love himself/herself and others.

**OUR GOALS:**

1. To provide a learning experience for young children in an environment that is nurturing, safe and stimulating.
2. To foster the unique abilities of each child and to help him/her develop self-esteem.
3. To help him/her meet this in ways that will encourage growth and development, intellectually, socially, physically and emotionally.

**POLICIES/PROCEDURES:**

We comply with all rules and regulations contained in the Minimum Standards and Guidelines Handbook. We have a copy of this handbook in our office and a copy is also available for your review at [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org). The number to the Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

Please read this book carefully and feel free to call the director at the school office at 903-534-0601 Monday through Friday with any questions.

All changes in The Growing Stick Learning Center's Policies and/or Procedures will be made in writing to our parents.

1. The center will open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday twelve months a year.
2. All preschool and school-age children are to be taken to their rooms by the parent upon arrival. Please be sure the worker sees you when you bring your child. Our staff cannot be responsible for children whose parents do not abide by this policy.
3. Consistent and prompt attendance is advised. Please notify the office of tardies/absences. **ALL STUDENTS MUST ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 11:00 am** unless prior arrangements are made with

the director. **If** student has been to doctor and received a note, student may return **after** 2:30 pm.

4. Children can be dismissed **ONLY** to those persons whose names appear on the enrollment form. Changes in this form must be given in writing to the staff by the parent.
5. All children must be picked up in their rooms or at the playground by the parent or an adult who is listed on the enrollment form. Teacher **MUST** see the parent or adult. Children cannot be released to siblings younger than 14 years of age.
6. Holidays for the Center is; New Years Eve, New Years Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, one in-service day for teacher training (usually in November) and a Friday before school starts in the Fall. If these holidays fall on a weekend, two week days will be taken before or after the weekend holiday.
7. **Should the Tyler Independent School District declare a closing due to inclement weather (snow, ice) the Center will close. If there is snow or ice in late afternoon, school may close early and would report this closing on local radio stations. In case of bad weather, tune in to local radio for reports of TISD closing or call our school in the late afternoon.**
8. We accept children on a weekly basis only. **NO DROP IN CARE IS AVAILABLE.**
9. The Center has no legal authority to refuse either parent the right to have custody of their child unless this is **COURT ORDERED** and the **CENTER HAS A COPY OF THE JUDGEMENT**. It is requested that non-custodial parents arrange visitation pick-up and return around non-school hours.
10. We ask that you allow us to deliver messages rather than call teachers to the phone.
11. Simple birthday parties with refreshments (cookies/punch) are permissible if arrangements are made with the teacher in advance. Invitations to parties outside of the Center will be distributed **ONLY** if there is one for each child. (This eliminates hurt feelings!)
12. Meals/snacks are available daily and planned with optimum dietary requirements in mind. A mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack are provided. Please do not bring food for your child unless there is enough for the entire class. Parents are always welcome to bring a lunch and eat with their child. (This is preferred for children 3 years old and up.) Soft drinks or other caffeine drinks are **NOT** allowed.

13. Show and Tell items should be brought only on the day planned by the teacher. Valuable items and guns are inappropriate for preschoolers. No toys should ever be brought to school unless it is a show and Tell day!
14. Periodic parent/teacher conferences will be held to help parents understand their child and our program better. It is best to NOT discuss problems concerning your child in front of him/her nor do we allow children to attend these conferences. Conferences are best held at previously arranged times and not at the beginning or end of the day when you drop off or pick up your child. The teacher's first responsibility is to her class! Written evaluations of social/academic progress will be given two times a year. A conference to discuss these evaluations may be arranged with your child's teacher.
15. Open Door Policy: You are always invited and welcome to visit your child. We want you to see how well your child does at school. Realize that your two year old child may not understand that you must leave again so you may need to observe this age group from another room (out of their sight). You are invited to watch your child's class from our office. Most rooms have cameras in them. If you join your child in the classroom your child is still expected to follow the teacher's direction and classroom rules.
16. Part-time children that come two or three days a week will not be allowed to switch days. Field trips are scheduled on different days to allow everyone a chance to go. All friends are welcome to come to special parties and events with their parents on any day!

### **ENROLLMENT:**

Enrollment is limited by the staff/child ratio which complies with state requirements. No child shall be denied admission because of race, sex, color, religion, or national origin. A case by case determination will be made considering the feasibility of enrolling a child with special needs, depending on the school's ability to meet the unique and individual requirements of the child.

Current enrolled families have first priority for registration followed by siblings, waiting list, and finally the community at large.

Before the first day of attendance, a completed enrollment form and medical/emergency record form, shot records along with a medical statement signed by the physician MUST be

returned to the office. **All students will need to bring a nap mat on their 1<sup>st</sup> day of school.**  
**Please write your child's name on the red side.**

### **TUITION & FEES**

A \$45.00 pre-registration fee is due at the time your child is registered in our program. This is a one-time fee as long as your child is enrolled in our program. This money also includes a key to our front door. This fee is NON-REFUNDABLE.

Our preschool has three (3) supply fees a year. Our school-age program has two (2). They are as listed on the chart that follows. These are also NON-REFUNDABLE fees.

**Tuition is due each week on Monday.** There is a \$15.00 late fee if tuition is not paid by 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday. All tuition must be paid each week as to not interrupt enrollment-attendance privileges. There is a \$30.00 insufficient funds fee on all returned checks. **All returned checks must be picked up immediately, and the amount of the check and the \$30.00 fee must be paid in cash at that time.** Lunch payments are due on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of each month. There will be a \$15.00 late fee if not paid by 8:00 a.m. on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) of each month.

There is an extra \$10.00 charge per day for school-aged holidays in addition to regular tuition. This is a pre-paid charge.

We offer a 10% family discount if three or more children are enrolled. We cannot grant discounts for sickness, vacations, or other temporary absences (see vacation periods for rules on vacations). We use tuition express (a bank to bank debit system) that deducts weekly, monthly, and bi-weekly.

Revised as of 6/1/09

Preschool Full Time Tuition	Preschool Only Daily 7:00-12:30	Preschool Full Day Daily 7:00-6:00	Preschool Fall Supply Fee	Preschool Spring Supply Fee	Preschool Summer Supply Fee
\$115.00	\$35.00	\$40.00	\$75.00	\$75.00	\$75.00

School-age Fall Tuition	School-age additional daily charge	School-age Summer Tuition	School-age Fall/Spring Supply Fee	School-age Summer Supply fee (includes all field trips)
\$50.00	\$10.00	\$115.00	\$40.00	\$100.00

Pre-Registration (All Students) with 1 door key	Late Tuition Fee (If not paid by 6:00 p.m. Wednesday)	Late Pick-Up fee per minute after 6:00 p.m.	Catered Hot Lunches (Per Day)	Returned Check Fee	T-Shirts (required for ALL field trips)
\$45.00	\$15.00	\$1.00	\$3.00	\$30.00	\$20.00

**CHRISTMAS BREAK/SPRING BREAK**

Since there are no daily rates for these weeks, if your child attends during these weeks the cost will be the fulltime tuition fee. If your child is not here, you will still be required to pay the full tuition rate to hold your child’s spot. We **MUST** be notified as to whether or not your child will attend in order to obtain proper staff. ***IF YOU DO NOT SIGN YOUR SCHOOL-AGED CHILD UP AND PRE-PAY, YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND DURING THOSE DAYS. \*\*WATCH FOR NOTICES TO BE POSTED!***

**OTHER DAYS**

When public school is closed for a day and your child needs to attend The Growing Stick Learning Center, there will be an additional fee of \$10.00 for that day. Your child should bring a sack lunch on these days. There will be a sign up sheet posted. ***YOUR CHILD MUST BE SIGNED UP AND PRE-PAID IN ORDER TO ATTEND!***

### **SUMMER TUITION & ACTIVITIES**

Tuition will begin on the first day of our summer program. Everyone who is signed up for the summer program is required to begin payment at that time. During summer months we will have water activities as well as fun field trips. Please watch for signs posted for times and instructions. The older classes will leave the Center to go swimming.

### **WITHDRAWING A STUDENT**

We require a two week **written** notice to withdraw a child from the Center. This courtesy allows us to fill your child's place with a child from the waiting list. If you fail to give a **written** notice, then you will leave owing two weeks on your account.

### **TUITION-FREE VACATION PERIODS**

After 12 months of continuous enrollment, your child may take a one-week, tuition-free vacation. We prefer this to be taken during the summer. **Two weeks written notice is required** before taking this vacation credit.

### **COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

Parents will be notified of policy changes and upcoming events through individual notes and The Growing Stick Grapevine. The director will contact you under special circumstances. As always, please contact the director with any concerns or questions about the policies and procedures. Parents are welcome to visit the school anytime during the hours of operation. However, due to the age of the child, distractions and disruptions sometimes have a negative effect on your child or others in the classroom.

### **LOST & FOUND**

All items without names will be put in the Lost & Found closet. All items will be donated to Goodwill every three months. All blankets and extra clothes of children who have left will be included in these items.



## **HEALTH**

Requirements for tuberculosis screening and testing vary across the state. Currently, Smith County is NOT requiring tuberculosis screening; however, in the event that this changes, we will require this screening.

### **Medical and Immunization Requirements**

Several medical records **MUST** be provided for your child's file by the first day of attendance.

Immunization record with month/day/year of:

1. Oral Polio vaccine (OPV)
2. DPT vaccine
3. Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccine
4. Varicella vaccine (Chicken Pox)
5. Hepatitis A
6. Hepatitis B
7. Hib
8. Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV7 or Prevnar)

A written statement, stating that the child is able to participate in the program, with the signature of a licensed physician who has examined the child within the past year is required.

Also, a Hearing and Vision screening for four and five year olds within 120 days of the first day of school is required.

### **HEALTH AND ILLNESS GUIDELINES**

Children are to be kept at home when they show signs of any of the following:

Fever of 100\* or higher

Pink Eye (must be treated before entering the school)

Ringworm (unless it can be covered securely)

Diarrhea

Vomiting

Chicken Pox

Measles

For the protection of all children, no ill child will be admitted to school. **Children should be free of fever/diarrhea and any other symptoms and without fever-reducing medicines for at least 24 hours before returning to school.** When a child becomes ill while at school, he/she will be separated from the other children and given staff supervision. Parents will be contacted and asked to pick-up the child within 30 minutes. **The only way your child can return to the Center before a 24 hour period is with a physician's release.**

Parents will be notified if their child has been exposed to a contagious disease at school.

Likewise, parents should be notified if their child has been exposed to or has a contagious disease such as pink eye (conjunctivitis), head lice, chicken pox, etc.

#### **MEDICATION POLICY**

Medication is given at 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Medicine must be signed in on the clipboard located on the fish tank with the date, amount, type of medicine and parent's signature.

It must be in the original container. If it is an over the counter medication, it must have the child's name and date written on it. If the medication states to seek your physician for the amount of medication to be given, we **MUST** have approval from the physician in writing in your child's file before administering. We can only give the recommended dose.

#### **SAFETY**

The Growing Stick Learning Center will release your child **ONLY** to those persons authorized on your enrollment form. No child will be allowed to leave with any unauthorized person. An ID

will be requested of any authorized individual not known to the staff member releasing the child. **PLEASE HELP US COMPLY WITH THIS RULE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN.**

### **ACCIDENTS / EMERGENCIES**

In the case of acute illness, injury or trauma, the parent will be notified immediately and emergency medical care (911) will be obtained as quickly as possible.

In case of a fire emergency, the children will go to the trike track located on the hill by the gymnasium.

In case of an environmental emergency evacuation, the children will go to Green Acres Baptist Church or Pleasant Hills Baptist Church.

### **DISCIPLINE**

The purpose of discipline is to help the child become self managing and socially responsible.

Discipline shall include positive guidance that is based on an understanding of individual needs and the developmental level of a child. Discipline shall be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior, recognizing causes and effects of feelings and actions, and improving their understanding of social expectations. Children are also encouraged to use language skills to solve problems.

We have three rules of acceptable behavior:

1. Each child will ensure his/her own safety and the safety of others.
2. Each child will respect the work and property of others.
3. Each child will learn so as not to interfere with another child's learning.

The staff will seek to redirect problem behavior to a constructive activity, thereby encouraging negotiation of differences and fostering self control. The children are taught to respect authority and the rights of others. Your child will not be subjected to striking or spanking by the staff. If the child cannot get control of himself/herself, then you will be called. Personal space is also available for children who need time to quiet themselves before rejoining classroom activity.

We want to work together with you for the good of your child. If we can't work together, then the director may request removal of a child from the program if he/she becomes an ongoing discipline problem.

### **BITING**

**Biting is a very serious and dangerous occurrence with little children.** The staff will work with the children and the family to stop the biting. If biting continues though, a child may be subject to dismissal from the Center. All biting will be addressed to both families. Biting incidents shall be kept confidential. Patience is asked of all families involved when biting in the classroom occurs. Please understand we will work to stop this and realize this is age-appropriate behavior that with consistency will usually stop. However, it does take some time to work out.

### **FOOD**

1. We provide a morning and afternoon snack with juice.
2. Children can buy a catered hot lunch for \$3.00 a day or bring their own lunch. Please make sure that it is clearly labeled with the child's name. Also, please make sure it has a high nutritional value. **WE ARE UNABLE TO HEAT LUNCHES THAT ARE BROUGHT FROM HOME!** Ask us for some tips how to keep lunches that are brought from home warm. We provide milk and encourage our children to drink milk at home. We do not allow soft drinks of any kind.

3. Monthly menu payments are due on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of each month, and late charges are assessed if they are not paid by 8:00 a.m. on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) of each month. Failure to pay menu payments on time WILL result in the cancellation of your child's lunches for the remainder of month.
4. On your child's birthday, you may bring a special treat. Keep it simple (no whole cakes, please). Please check with you child's teacher in advance for allergies that other children may have.
5. For your child's safety, please notify the school office as well as your child's teacher if he/she has an allergy. Please let us know what your child can have in its place.
6. Children may bring breakfast and eat in kitchen from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. All food will be thrown away AT 7:30 a.m.! If your child arrives at 7:30 a.m. with breakfast, you must sit with the child in the kitchen until breakfast is complete. The child may NOT be left alone in the kitchen to finish his/her breakfast. If your child arrives at school AFTER 7:30 a.m., then he/she MUST eat breakfast at home. Remember, a healthy breakfast is the BEST thing you can provide your children to help them have a successful day.

## **CLOTHING**

1. Children should wear sturdy, comfortable, washable play clothes.
2. Children should wear clothes suitable for both outdoors and indoors. **NO FLIP FLOPS!** Please, **NO cowboy boots.** (Boots can hurt other children when kicked or stepped on with them.) Sandals are not safe for children to run or climb in or for Gross Motor Skills class. If a toddler age child removes sandals from feet, then we will request tennis shoes. **Tennis shoes are preferred for safety purposes.**

3. Children go outside to play every day unless there is rain **or** under 40 degrees so dress them accordingly. Please leave a jacket at the Center as cooler weather approaches. Children's names should be placed on jackets, sweaters, hats, gloves, etc., with permanent markers.
4. Children should have at least one set of clothes (two if potty training), in a labeled zip lock bag. Clothing for two year olds will be kept in their baskets. Clothing for three year olds and pre kindergarteners will be kept in the bathroom closet. We will let you know what we will need to start potty training at that time. We have a potty-training contract that must be signed and discussed with the child's morning teacher before the start of potty-training.
5. Children should bring an ample supply of disposable diapers. **Please write your child's name on each diaper.** Your teacher should let you know when you will need more either by writing it on the board or in a note. You will be called to bring more up to the school if we run out.

### **TOYS/JEWELRY FROM HOME**

Please discourage children from bringing toys, jewelry, and money to school, except if a teacher has requested it. NO guns, knives, matches, or unsuitable items may be brought at any time. The Growing Stick Learning Center cannot be responsible for items that get lost or broken.

### **REST TIME**

1. As required in the State Minimum Standards and Guidelines, "a supervised rest period must be provided after the noon meal and lasting no longer than three hours." The Growing Stick Learning Center's rest time lasts one and a half (1 ½) to two (2) hours depending on classroom age level.

2. Children should bring security or naptime items such as a blanket and stuffed animal to help their transition into rest time go more smoothly. Everything **MUST** be labeled and fit inside your child's cubby.

## **CURRICULUM**

A theme is emphasized weekly and reinforced through a wide range of "hands on" learning experiences which promote each child's development. Parents are provided with a Curriculum Newsletter highlighting the themes presented and any special activities during the month. This goes out every other month. Families are also given monthly calendars that tell about weekly themes, colors, shape, numbers and letters for the month.

- **Circle Time:** This is a gathering time in the morning in which the unit for the week is introduced and the concepts are taught through literature, singing, finger plays, flannel board stories, questioning strategies, and games.
- **Arts and Crafts:** Projects are theme related and encourage creativity including large and small motor skills.
- **Music and Movement Time:** Different songs are emphasized weekly and intertwined with movement, instruments and rhythm.
- **General Assembly:** The director has a general session each morning and sings songs that relate to the weekly unit.
- **Learning Center Time:** Children choose from a variety of centers in the center room. These centers are changed each week to correlate with the unit. The centers are designed to stimulate each child's curiosity for learning.

- **Snack and Lunch:** This is a time for fellowship, teaching manners and developing social skills.
- **Rest/Quiet Time:** This gives children a time to relax and wind down. This time may include a special story and/or soothing music.
- **Free Play:** Children choose to play from a variety of toys offered. This encourages cooperation, role playing, sharing, creativity and social skills.
- **Outdoor Play and Learning Areas:** This provides an opportunity for children to use large equipment, play in the sand and develop social skills.
- **Nature Garden:** This area is set up with picnic tables for nature crafts. This area is also set up for gardening experiences and quiet reading areas.
- **Gross Motor Skills Class:** We offer a gross motor class to help work on the fine tuning of large motor skills that some children may be lacking.
- **Science Discovery:** This is incorporated with the Learning Center class. The children explore the wonders of science with our hands on experiments and demonstrations that change weekly to correlate with the unit.
- **Sand & Water Activities:** This center provides a hands on approach to sensory activities. It is changed each week that correlate with the unit. This center is designed to stimulate each child's curiosity for learning.

## FIELD TRIPS

We must have a signed information sheet on each child **BEFORE** the first field trip is taken for the year. All field trip notices will be posted at least 48 hours in advance of a field trip. All trips will require parent helpers. Please sign up with your child's teacher if you can attend. Your



child's teacher should also give you a note that goes over frequently asked questions. All children **MUST** wear Growing Stick t-shirts on field trips. You may purchase from the office for \$20.00. If you realize your child will not be here by the time of the field trip please bring them **after** their class has returned. It is easier on your child if they don't get here and realize that they missed the trip!

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents and staff share a common commitment to each child's development. Communication and cooperation are essential and should be ongoing.

### **PARENT'S ROLE**

1. Speak with the teacher regularly so that you and she may work together in your child's best interest.
2. Share your hobbies, talents, or collections with your child's class.
3. We welcome parent volunteers--even if only for one hour.
4. If you are pleased, we would appreciate you telling friends and neighbors so that they might be encouraged to register their children, too.

### **PARENT ADVISORY BOARD**

We encourage you to become active in The Growing Stick Learning Center's Parent Advisory Group. This group has been set up to formally involve you in the continuing well-being of your children while they are in our care. The group meets two or three times a year at noon.

### **DROP OFF, PICK UP & RELEASE**

We open our doors at 7:00 a.m. All children must be walked into our school by an adult. We pick up (only) at some TISD and Whitehouse ISD schools after school. Please call the office by 2:00 p.m. with any after-school pick-up changes each day. ALL students must be picked up from The Growing Stick by 6:00 p.m. You will be charged \$1.00 per minute that you are late.

We will call the official Tyler time and weather phone number if there is any question. **This money is due immediately and in cash!**

#### **AUTHORIZATION TO PICK-UP CHILD RELEASE**

At the time of enrollment the parent will provide the names of those authorized to pick up the child. No child will be released to a person not authorized by the parent. This authorization must be in writing and given to the director. If anyone other than the parent will be picking up the child, sign the “weekly message sheet” and state the name of the person who will pick up the child on that day!

#### **ANIMALS**

Classroom teachers may have pets in their rooms. If your child has severe animal allergies, please tell your child’s teacher concerning this, and we will remove the pet. Pets may visit our school, but this must always be authorized in advance and a notice will be posted.