

Prettyboy Recreation Tiny Tots

2022 – 2023

Parent Handbook

Program Director:

Shelly Regars

shellyregars@gmail.com

Phone:

410-357-9509

Hours of Operation:

9:00am-3:30pm (Monday-Friday)

Address:

19810 Middletown Rd.

Freeland, MD 21053

Located in the Recreation Room of Prettyboy Elementary School

Prettyboy Recreation Council Chairpersons

Chrissy Brandt – chrissybrandt1@gmail.com

TAX-ID: 52-1071231

License #117702

WELCOME

Thank you for choosing Prettyboy Tiny Tots for your child. Please read this handbook thoroughly. It is important that you feel comfortable with our policies and procedures. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to the Program Director or one of our volunteer chairpersons. We appreciate your trust in us and look forward to spending time with your child.

ABOUT US

The Tiny Tots Program operates in the Recreation Rooms of Prettyboy Elementary School.

Tiny Tots provides a preschool education for children ages 2-5.

Tiny Tots has been an important part of the Prettyboy community for many years. Lots of our staff members live in the community and some are former students! Tiny Tots is run through the Prettyboy Recreation Council, a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization that works with Baltimore County Recreation and Parks to provide organized recreational activities throughout the year for the families of the Prettyboy Community. Recreation Council meetings are held at 7:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month in the Recreation Room at Prettyboy Elementary. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend.

MISSION STATEMENT AND PHILOSOPHY

Mission:

To provide exceptional childcare while fostering each child's intellectual, social, and moral development in an academic-rich environment.

Philosophy:

It is the philosophy of Prettyboy Recreation Tiny Tots that children be encouraged to learn and grow by providing developmentally appropriate experiences where each child can succeed in a safe and loving environment. We believe that each child is an individual that is capable, curious, full of potential, and worthy of respect. Our program provides an inclusive setting that recognizes each student's abilities, interests, needs, and learning style. We promote meaningful play as an avenue to learning. It cultivates creativity, curiosity, discovery, and problem solving which allows for personal growth and the development of positive self-image. We champion risk takers and invite the sharing of ideas. Our program is child centered. We take a holistic approach by educating the whole child. We believe that developing social skills, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness are just as important as the ABCs and 123s.

Our Tiny Tots staff is educated in early childhood development and trained to facilitate learning in a nurturing environment. We work to ease the transition from home to school – helping children learn how to get along with others, to develop skills through active games, and spurring emotional growth through group activities. Our teachers maintain a balance of child-directed and adult-directed activities that are both stimulating and challenging. Woven into that curriculum are music and dance, arts and crafts, outdoor play, field trips, and special events. We recognize that parents are the child's first teachers and that kids learn best when parents are involved in their educational experience. Throughout the year we welcome parents to our classroom and invite them to attend field trips, to participate in special events and in our monthly community service activity. Student progress is closely monitored and shared with parents on a regular basis through progress reports, report cards, and conferences. Family involvement is encouraged and supported. Our Program follows the Maryland preschool curriculum standards in the following domains: Language, Math, Science, Social Studies, Social-Emotional, Gross Motor, and Fine Motor. Our statements and beliefs reflect the position of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC.)

Our Tiny Tots Program is devoted to providing a secure, caring, stimulating, inclusive environment which is responsive to the needs of individual children regardless of ability, race, background, culture, religion, gender, or economic circumstances. Second only to meeting the needs of all the children in our care is safety. All staff members are first aid/CPR certified. We participate in the Prettyboy Elementary School emergency drills. We have a Safety Plan in place that is reviewed annually. All staff are trained in the appropriate response.

Staff is encouraged to connect on a personal basis with every child, every day to help them develop secure, healthy relationships with adults other than their parents. We promote personal responsibility and respect for all living things so the children in our care grow up to be successful, productive, caring members of our community.

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Tiny Tots operates on a philosophy of providing quality care and developmentally appropriate experiences so that every child may grow to his/her fullest potential as an individual. Learning opportunities are planned in a way that encourages children to express their ideas and feelings, to develop problem solving and reasoning skills, and to enhance self-confidence. We provide intentional guidance and rich experiences that build upon individual strengths and talents. We strive to equip our students with the skills needed to become productive members of our community.

At Tiny Tots we serve children ages 2-5. We implement a child centered, inclusive multicultural curriculum that encourages creativity and rewards risk taking. We do this knowing that all kids are curious and capable of learning across all developmental domains: physical, cognitive, emotional, language, and social development. We acknowledge that all students learn at their own pace and that milestones can occur at different rates and stages in a child's development. Our teachers work with skills typically acquired from ages 1-6. If a child is not age appropriate, then we must meet them where they are at. In the same vein, we are obligated to challenge those who have met age appropriate goals.

Curriculum can be broadly defined as the totality of student experiences that occur during the educational process. At Tiny Tots, we believe that it's interactive. It's everything that takes place while the students are in our care. While it is certainly a planned sequence of instruction designed to meet our Program's goals, it's so much more. It's not just academics but also the physical environment, learning materials, routines, and transitions. Curriculum encompasses our developmental and learning goals, assessments, our staff and the methods they use to teach skills. It's basically any element that aids children in learning.

Our Curriculum at Tiny Tots is based on our philosophy and guided by both Healthy Beginnings: Supporting Development and Learning from Birth through Three Years of Age and the Maryland Early Learning Standards. Both define the key aspects of development and learning that are the foundation for a child's academic and life-long achievement. As Early Childhood educators, we play an important role in laying that foundation and setting the stage for success. We use these standards as guidelines to develop the framework that sets our expectations for student learning and to hold our teachers accountable. We are constantly assessing how our students are progressing towards these standards and adjust when needed.

Our Curriculum includes the following areas: Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Health, Physical Education, Fine Arts, and Social Foundations.

REGISTRATION

The following needs to be completed and turned in **before** the registration deadline:

- Registration form
- Attendance/Rates form
- Registration Fee

In order to attend Tiny Tots, the following paperwork needs to be completed and turned in by Monday, August 8, 2022. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS other than Health Inventory, Lead Certificate, and Immunization Certificate but they need to be turned in before 8/29/22.

- Emergency Form
- Health Inventory Part One – completed by parent
- Health Inventory Part Two - signed by a physician and dated no earlier than 9/1/2021.
- Immunization Certificate - up to date, signed by a physician, and dated no earlier than 9/1/2021
- Completed Lead Testing certificate (Children ages 6 or younger)
- All About Me form
- Parent Guide to Regulated Child Care – Signature Needed
- Parent Signature Page – Photo Waiver, Handbook Acceptance, Tuition Discount
- Topical Base Care Product Administration form – if applicable
- Prescription Medication Authorization form – if applicable

This paperwork is MANDATORY per MSDEOCC.

All must be received in order to attend the first day.

Registration Fee is due at the time of registration.

Parents/guardians are required to keep us informed of changes in address, telephone numbers, emails, and other pertinent information listed on any of the above forms. Please contact the Program Director to update information as needed. We recommend that you keep copies of submitted forms for your records.

Parents/guardians must inform staff if the child has ever had fever related seizures, food allergies, or any other serious medical condition. Parents are encouraged to update staff on any behavioral concerns. At the time of enrollment, we encourage our families to provide any information that will improve their child's ability to succeed in our Program including, but not limited to, IEPs or IFSPs. We know that when families share these documents, it allows the Program to work most effectively in meeting the child's individual needs.

HOURS OF OPERATION

We are open from 9:00am-3:30pm, however teachers will open the classrooms at 8:45am so children can have a relaxed arrival and teachers can promptly start instruction at 9:00am. Morning enrichment activities are provided, each day, that lead into the daily instruction. **Families are asked to arrive early and let your child take advantage of this relaxed, social, child-directed learning experience.** Just think about it...coming 15 minutes early over 5 days gives your child a whole hour and 15 minutes extra instruction and social time! **Our classroom doors will close at 9:05am in an effort to provide uninterrupted instruction.** It is very distracting for everyone when we have late arrivals. Please reach out to the Director if there needs to be an exception made for your child. **Our classroom doors will open at 1:00pm or 3:30pm for Pick Up.** In the past, parents have been able to ring the bell if they arrive before the dismissal time but we are asking you not to do that. If you need to pick up early on a given day, please inform us at Drop Off. Our teachers typically plan full days and need every minute in the schedule. Please be respectful of the staff's time and personal responsibilities. Recurring late arrival and late pick-up can result in termination of services.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

For your child's safety, a parent or guardian must accompany the child in and out of the building each day. Please do not leave children unattended in the parking lot. Every child needs to be signed in and out on the attendance sheet with a parent signature and the time in/out. If you need help locating the attendance sheet, please ask a staff member for assistance. Your child can't be released to anyone except those indicated on your registration paperwork. If there is an exception, we must be notified in writing and the person picking up will need to show identification. No one under the age of 16 is permitted to pick up your child. We understand that sometimes Drop Off can be difficult for children. We will work with you to ensure a smooth transition. If necessary, we will do a Kiss-n-Go at the front door.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent, please notify us by emailing the Program Director at shellyregars@gmail.com or by calling 410-357-9509. When children are absent from the center, whether due to illness or vacation, there is no reduction in tuition. If your child will be absent for an extended period, please inform the Program Director in writing as early as possible. A discussion re: tuition will follow.

ATTENDANCE

Due to MD State imposed staffing requirements, we require a 15-day notice for any changes in attendance. You must give written notice to the Program Director if your child will no longer be attending Tiny Tots. Otherwise, you will be invoiced and responsible for payment.

We reserve the right to terminate a child for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late dropping off your child
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Failure of child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet your child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations

DROP-INS

Depending on staffing availability, we may be able to accommodate drop-in attendance for **enrolled** students on days/times that they would normally not attend. Parents must contact the Program Director for availability and approval.

Tiny Tots Drop-in Rates

\$25 per day for 9:00am-1:00pm or \$40 per day for 9:00am-3:30pm

CLOSINGS & DELAYS

In the case of inclement weather, parents have several options to find out our opening status:

- Look for a group email. **Please make sure we have an up-to-date email address.**
- Call the BCPS information line at: 443-809-5555
- Download the "BCPS NOW" App

Tiny Tots follows the closing/delay schedule for Baltimore County Public Schools (Hereford Zone):

- BCPS, 1 hour delay: Tiny Tots will open at 9:30am
- BCPS, 2 hour delay: Tiny Tots will open at 10:30am
- BCPS, Closed: Tiny Tots will be closed
- BCPS has a scheduled early dismissal: Please check our Calendar. We will make every effort to keep the Tiny Tots schedule as regular as possible.
- BCPS has an unexpected early closure: Please check emails. We will make phone calls if necessary. **Please remember, per BCPS, that we cannot be in the building if it's closed.**

Payment

You will be billed according to the Rates/Attendance Form you submitted at registration. You will be invoiced on the 15th of every month for the following month. Payment is due on or before the 1st of each month. At 30 days past due, your child will no longer be able to attend the Program, until the balance is paid in full. Please communicate with the Director if you are experiencing financial issues. Return check fee for insufficient funds is \$25.

Checks are the preferred method of payment and should be made payable to Prettyboy Recreation Council (PBRC.) Checks can be placed in the Lock Box in the classroom or mailed to:

HBTT Program
c/o PBRC
P.O. Box 518
Monkton, MD 21111

As of May 1, 2022 we do not accept Credit Cards. **We are working on setting up an online payment option.** Parents will be notified ASAP if this happens.

HOLIDAYS

Tiny Tots will be closed on the following holidays:

Labor Day, Election Day, Thanksgiving/Black Friday, Winter Break, New Year's Day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Spring Break, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Memorial Day.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Tiny Tots will follow a scheduled daily routine. It is important to have your child to class on time. Teachers will open classrooms at 8:45am for a 9:00am start. It is very distracting when students arrive late and they miss out on the Morning Enrichment Activities that our teachers begin the day with. Teachers/assistants are expected to provide educational activities that strike a balance between being teacher-lead and child-directed. We are dedicated to addressing individual needs and challenging students to be the best they can be.

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

At Tiny Tots we value being healthy and feeling good. We know that students will perform at their highest level when eating well, sleeping well, and getting daily physical exercise. We promote keeping active. We go outside every day weather permitting. We encourage families to set consistent bedtimes, so our students are well rested.

LUNCH/SNACKS/WATER

Nutritional snacks are provided once mid-morning and in the afternoon if your child attends full day. Parents are required to provide lunch for their child. We ask for lunches to be nutritious and contain as little sugar as possible. Lunches should be well balanced and emphasize nutrient-rich foods. Please do not send in unopened cans or foods which require the use of a stove. Meals that require microwaving are okay, but these need to be packed in a microwaveable-safe container. Safe, fresh drinking water is always provided including during meals/snacks and the staff encourages students to drink water throughout the day. **Children are encouraged to bring in personal water bottles.** We also offer 1% milk or 100% fruit juices. Snack and lunch times are important parts of our Curriculum. We use the time to teach nutrition and food concepts. Children are reminded to take small bites and are encouraged to taste everything. Teachers help children gauge their level of fullness and model good manners. All students learn personal responsibility as they clean up after themselves. It is a great time for friends to socialize. **ALL students are expected to participate in snack and lunch time.** If you are particular about your child's diet, we can have a discussion as to what snack foods would be appropriate. Tiny Tots is open to purchasing particular food, within reason or you can provide what you would like your child to eat.

NAPTME/Rest Time

Students registered full day will be required to rest each day between 1:15-2:00pm. We will lower the lights and play soft music. Cots are provided. Children are expected to sleep or lay quietly on their cot during this time. Pillowcases and blankets can be kept at the center during the week. We will send them home, as needed for laundering. If your child likes cuddling with a stuffed animal for naptime, they are welcome to do so.

SUPPLIES

Each day, please send your child in clean and dressed appropriately for the weather. Whenever possible we like to spend time outdoors. Families are expected to provide:

- Lunch, water bottle
- Extra Clothes to be kept in backpack or cubby. Please include underwear and socks.
- Diapers, Pull Ups, Wipes if applicable
- Naptime bedding if applicable. Stuffed animals are OK for naptime.

All supplies should be labeled with student's first and last names. Our cubby space is limited so please only bring a small backpack and lunch box each day. All bedding can stay at the center and will be sent home, as needed for washing. Please ensure that backpacks don't contain any sharp items, medication, or choking hazards. There is a good possibility that your child's clothing will get stained or soiled from food, paint, markers, dirt, bubbles, etc. **Please dress your child ready to play!** Tiny Tots is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged property.

All needed educational supplies will be provided by Tiny Tots. Throughout the year, parents will be given opportunities to send in supplies as needed for instruction, projects, or parties.

SICKNESS POLICY

Parents agree to keep their child home or seek alternative care arrangements for the following conditions:

- Pain – any complaints of unexplained or undiagnosed pain
- Fever of 99°F/37.2°C or higher
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Unusual or unexplained headache or stiff neck
- 3 unexplained diarrheas or loose stool in close increments
- Nausea, vomiting, or abdominal cramps
- Severe itching of scalp or body
- Open sores like those seen with Chicken Pox or Hand, Foot, Mouth Disease. Children need to be free from blisters/sores or they need to be completely scabbed over before returning.
- Known or suspected communicable diseases
- Any discharge/drainage from eyes, nose, ears. If a child has pinkeye/conjunctivitis, they need to have been on antibiotic/drop treatment for **24 hours** before returning.

When a child becomes ill while in our care, we will make the child comfortable in a quiet place away from others. Here the child can rest and be closely supervised. Parents will be notified immediately and agree to begin making alternate work arrangements or arrangements for alternative care. If your child is seriously ill, you or an alternate must come for the child **IMMEDIATELY**. If we cannot reach the parent, we will call an emergency contact given at time of registration. 911 may be contacted depending on the seriousness of the illness. **Children must be free from fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.**

INJURIES

At Tiny Tots we make every effort to keep all students injury-free. Unfortunately, children fall, get scrapes and cuts, and can injure themselves sometimes without even trying. All staff is CPR/First Aid certified. We will perform basic first aid and record the event. At time of pick up, parent will be notified of the injury, cause of injury, and the staff actions following the incident. If necessary, staff will contact parents or emergency contacts. 911 may be contacted depending on the seriousness of the injury.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

At Tiny Tots several of our staff members are certified to administer medications. For a child to be given either a prescription or OTC medication, parents need to complete the proper paperwork. All forms are on the Prettyboy Recreation Council website. All medications are to be brought in by the parent and labeled with the child's first and last names. Prescription medication requires a signature from the prescribing physician. We prefer that medications are given at home but if they can't be, we are happy to help. **Please know that we can only administer one dose of medication per day.**

HEAD LICE POLICY

If a child is found to have head lice, the parents/guardians will be notified, and the child will need to be picked up immediately. The child will only be readmitted to the program after the staff determines that treatment has been effective, typically 48 hours once treatment began. There are several products on the market that can be used to kill head lice. Some are OTC and others are prescription strength. It is recommended that all members of the household be treated.

BASIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our Program is dedicated to keeping staff and students safe and healthy. We have a Health Plan in place to ensure that all employees understand their part. It addresses not only how we obtain student and staff health information but how staff are to deal with illnesses, injuries, infectious diseases, first aid, administering medication, hand washing, safely handling food, and record keeping. In addition to being trained on our Health Plan, all employees are required to take the MSDEOCC required course, "Basic Health and Safety Training." Per MSDEOCC, employees will take this annually.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Several staff members have taken the MSDEOCC approved course, "Emergency Preparedness in Childcare." We have an Emergency Plan in place. It addresses the various types of safety drills we participate in with Prettyboy Elementary School. Each employee is trained on our Emergency Plan and will be expected to follow the procedures. This plan is kept in our "Ready to Go" bag. Parents are encouraged to ask questions as they arise.

SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

In accordance with the procedures set forth in the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, any staff member having reasonable cause to believe that a child known to him/her in a professional capacity may be an abused or neglected child shall immediately report the matter to the Program Director. Oral and written reports will be made to the proper authorities. **All our staff are mandated reporters.**

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

We want families to stay informed of day-to-day happenings and special events. We use the following methods of communication with parents:

- Monthly Newsletters and Calendars are put in the Take Home/Communication Folders.
- Emails – These will be sent periodically to update families on the happenings of Tiny Tots. These will include but not be limited to policy updates, exposure to illnesses, and activities added to the Calendar.
- Parent Information Center located inside each classroom door. Payment Lock Box is also there.
- Communication with staff at the start and end of the day are always helpful and encouraged.

SKILL ASSESSMENT

For our teachers, assessment is a cycle. Instruct, observe, document, reflect, analyze, evaluate, and summarize. Instruct again if necessary or move to another skill if mastered. At Tiny Tots we believe in showing results! At the beginning of each school year our teachers/aides pretest the children. We want to know exactly what our students know and what they need to work on. Our test assesses student knowledge of shapes, numbers 0-20, upper and lowercase letters, individual phonemes, beginning and ending sounds, distinguishing sizes (more/less, most/least, long/short, large/small,) basic math concepts, and a writing sample. At the end of the year we will do a posttest or a Kindergarten readiness test on all students. Throughout the school year our teachers put out Progress Reports and Report Cards.

CONFERENCES

Twice a year we schedule parent-teacher conferences. We try to offer both day and evening time slots and offer a telephone conference as an option. At any time, a parent can request a conference if they are concerned with how their child is progressing or if they are looking for ways to challenge their little ones. We value family input.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

All staff is expected to use what they know regarding Child Development to enable them to find strategies on how to improve learning. First and foremost, we focus on the whole child by addressing physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills. Children are unique and learn in various ways and at different paces. Oftentimes a child may excel in one subject and struggle in another. Teachers/Aides are expected to provide experiences that include all learning modalities and accommodate individual students. Activities should be age appropriate and balance both teacher-directed and child-lead lessons. It is our responsibility to help all students improve their social competence and build self-esteem. A young child's development has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adult they will become. Our staff is dedicated to investing in the young children in our care to maximize their future well-being.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990/2009

The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability or special health needs in all areas of life including education and childcare. The purpose of the law was to ensure that persons with disabilities or special health needs would have equal opportunities and enjoy the same rights as everyone else. Employees are required to take the MSDEOCC approved course, "Including All Children and the ADA." Our Program is dedicated to making all children feel included. We will make accommodations as necessary to see that all our students can learn and play safely. At time of enrollment we encourage families to share IEPs or IFPSs if their child has one. All staff will follow the individualized plan. We will work with any therapists or special educators involved.

TRAINING

We have a diverse staff with each member bringing something different to the team. Some of our staff hold degrees in Early Childhood Education and Special Education. Some have been working with children of all ages for many years. All staff participate in taking yearly Continuing Education classes and are expected to use what they know regarding Child Development to enable them to find strategies on how to improve the learning process. First and foremost, we focus on the whole child by addressing physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills. Children are unique and learn in various ways and at different paces. Oftentimes a child may excel in one area and struggle in another. Teachers/Aides are expected to provide experiences that include all learning modalities and accommodate individual students. Activities should be age appropriate and balance both teacher-directed and child-lead lessons. It is our responsibility to help all students improve their social competence and build self-esteem. A young child's development has a direct effect on their overall development and on the adult they will become. Our staff is dedicated to investing in the young kids in our care to maximize their future well-being.

STATE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Prettyboy Recreation Tiny Tots is fully licensed and complies with all applicable licensing regulations and standards. These standards relate to our location, staff, health, safety procedures, nutrition, care giver to child ratios, and record keeping. We believe that these standards are in the best interest of the children. The Recreation Rooms are subject to inspection by state and city health, fire, and licensing officials. All childcare in Maryland is regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care's (OCC) Licensing Branch. For more information on this please follow this link to the Maryland State Department of Education's pamphlet on *A Guide to Regulated Child Care*:
https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/guide_to_regulated_child_care.pdf

PHOTOGRAPHS

Throughout the school year our staff will be taking pictures and possibly videos that may be put on our social media page or used for marketing and advertising. Families may decline to have their child included in these photos/videos by indicating this preference on our Parent Signature Page.

MD EXCELS

Tiny Tots participates in MD Excels. It is a voluntary program for licensed childcare and early education programs. Being a participant shows our continuous commitment to meet standards that **exceed** the state's licensing requirements. Research shows that quality childcare and early learning experiences provide the building blocks for life-long learning. Early childhood professionals play a crucial role in creating the stable foundation that children need to be successful. As a MD Excels participant, we commit to quality by engaging in an ongoing process of self-evaluation and improvement. MD Excels focuses on the following content areas:

- Licensing and Compliance
- Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
- Accreditation and Rating Scales
- Developmentally Appropriate Learning and Practice
- Administrative Policies and Practices.

As of January 2020, Maryland has 4,712 participating programs and providers - 4,202 with published quality ratings. We are proud to be one of them.

CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS

We are pleased to announce our participation in the Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program. This Program provides financial assistance with childcare costs to eligible working families in Maryland. This program is managed through a centralized vendor – Child Care Subsidy Central (CSC Central.) For more information or to see if you qualify, go to this website: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The families we serve live in Northern Baltimore County. Nearby are several parks and nature centers. There are also many family friendly, child-centered museums and businesses not too far away. The state of Maryland offers many resources and opportunities for families with children with special needs or disabilities. There are also public and private agencies available to help families concerned with developmental delays or behavioral issues. We have developed a list of these resources. The document will be emailed to families at the beginning of the school year and hard copies are available in our Parent Information Booth. We encourage our families to take advantage of these resources.

VISITORS

Parents of our students are always welcome to stop by and see our program in action. Employees of Baltimore County Recreation and Parks and any member of the Prettyboy Recreation Council are also welcome at any time. These visits are to be conducted in such a manner as to not disrupt the daily operations of Tiny Tots. All others need to clear their visit through the Program Director or one of our volunteer co-chairpersons. All visits are to be pre-approved and entered in our Visitor Logbook.

CHILD CUSTODY

If only one parent has custody of a child, the center must be notified immediately upon enrollment. If the non-custodial parent is unauthorized to pick up the child, the custodial parent must inform the Program Director and provide a certified copy of the court order confirming that one parent doesn't have visitation rights. Without such a court order the law grants parents joint custody and the center isn't allowed to refuse the release of the child to either parent. If there is a restraining order that involves the child, please ensure that a copy is given to the Program Director at time of enrollment.

SCREEN TIME POLICY

At Tiny Tots we take a personal interest in the health and wellbeing of the children in our care. As a result, we follow the recommendations of the American Pediatric Academy on Screen Time.

- Children ages 2-5 should watch no more than 1 hour per day total of high-quality programs. Adults should co-view with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the real world around them.

In our case, "Screen Time" refers to television/DVDs. We do not have any computers or other interactive media in our classrooms. Tiny Tots understands that television can get in the way of exploring, playing, and interacting with others which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development.

However, when used wisely and intentionally television/DVDs can support learning. It can connect on-screen and off-screen activities with an emphasis on co-viewing and co-participation between adults, children, and their peers.

Therefore, we restrict Screen Time by:

- Allowing our Tiny Tots, a maximum of 30 minutes total per week of educational and age appropriate Screen Time to include curriculum coordinated educational DVDs.
- Not allowing any Screen Time during meals and snacks.

We do not rely on television or movies to fill space in our daily schedule. It does not replace activities such as creative play, real-life exploration, physical activity, outdoor experiences, conversation, or social interactions. We have designed our curriculum and daily routines to promote cognitive and social development as well as physical active play.

We will continue to encourage our families to designate screen-free times together, such as dinner or driving, as well as screen-free locations in the home, such as bedrooms.

We know that this generation of kids and adolescents is growing up immersed in technology and media. It can harm the amount and quality of sleep a person gets. Problems arise when technology and media replace physical activity, hands-on exploration, and face-to-face social interaction in the real world, which is critical to learning. Because of this we will always promote old school play over the use of technology.

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE POLICY

The early years are an important time in a child's social and emotional development. Every moment is a challenge to act/react appropriately and make good choices. The word, "discipline" has, at its root meaning, "instruction" or "training." This meaning rather than punishment is the foundation of our approach to behavior management. We accept that children will sometimes display their emotions or try to achieve their goals in unproductive or immature ways. It's natural and just a part of being a child. Much of a child's most valuable learning occurs during behavioral problem-solving.

At Tiny Tots we believe in establishing consistent, easy to understand, age appropriate limits. Student behavior is guided by a manageable number of clearly stated "Dos." Our list of "Dos" will help children see what appropriate behavior looks like. When clear expectations are present, children increasingly become more responsible and self-reliant. We believe in having adults present who respond to inappropriate behavior with insight, sensitivity, and skill. When improper behavior occurs, it's important for children to understand why the behavior was improper and how to modify it. We see misbehaviors as opportunities to teach children the social, emotional, and communication skills necessary to manage themselves, resolve conflicts, prevent bullying, and develop pro-social behaviors. Our staff views working with challenging behaviors as part of the job. Guidance is always positive, productive, and immediate. Discipline, when properly practiced, uses a multifaceted approach that teaches and reinforces desired behaviors.

We focus on:

Modeling – If adults can handle their emotions, so can children.

Encouragement – Be kind, helpful, and caring of each other. Treat others as you want to be treated.

Empathy – Look at something from a different perspective. Not everyone feels or responds the same way.

Assertiveness – Be confident. We promote positive self-image, self-respect, and self-love. It's OK to set boundaries for yourself. We practice "using words" when pushed too far.

Composure – Staying calm and in control of yourself are lifelong skills we encourage.

Conflict Resolution – We empower children to "walk away" when situations escalate. Use the alone time to practice composure, positive self-talk, and think through your options.

Accountability - "No one is perfect." Making mistakes is human and we encourage children to be accountable when they make mistakes and hurt others.

Choices – Every day is full of decision making. Impulse control and delaying gratification are discussed openly. We help children see that it sometimes takes a while to achieve goals and that productive choices and perseverance pay off.

Discipline helps children learn and internalize lifelong skills of self-motivation, competency, and empathy. When a pattern of behavior persists that endangers self, others, or property or significantly disrupts our Program, we will work with the family to find solutions, up to and including referral for outside services or exclusion from the Program.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

At Tiny Tots we see families as essential partners in the education of the children in our care. We strive to engage families in every aspect of our curriculum. We are committed to reaching out and including them in meaningful ways. We encourage families to make a commitment to actively support their child's learning and development.

Family engagement is not a single event. It's a shared responsibility in which regular, two-way communication ensures that the student is on track to meet grade-level requirements. Effective family engagement involves building trust. Through encouragement and caring we can affect the well-being of both child and family in a very positive way. It is a collaborative and strengths-based process through which early childhood staff, families, and kids build relationships that are productive and goal-orientated.

We invite families of our Tiny Tots to:

- Attend our Back to School night to meet staff and hear about our Program.
- Look through the Communication Folder each night.
- Complete the MDSEOCC "All About Me" form so we can learn more about their child.
- Send in pictures of immediate and extended family for our "Families" board.
- Come into our classroom to read to our students or share a special talent.
- Visit our classroom during "American Education Week" to see our teachers and students engaged in active learning.
- Visit our classroom during "Career Week" to teach our students about their job/career.
- Participate in our "Parent's Night Out" events in December and February. We offer free childcare, dinner, and entertainment so that parents can holiday shop or go on a Valentine's Day date without kids in tow.
- Attend classroom holiday parties, field trips, and special events.
- Attend their child's birthday party during snack time.
- Participate in our monthly fundraisers/Community Service Projects.
- Read our monthly Newsletters.
- Participate in our "National Breakfast Week" feast.
- Participate in parent-teacher conferences twice a year. Parents are asked beforehand if there are any specifics that need to be discussed. At the first meeting, parents help set an individual goal or two for their child to work on. These goals are assessed at the final conference.
- Respond to the "Comments" section of our Progress Reports and Report Cards.
- Answer our End-of-the-Year survey to help us determine what is working well and what needs improvement.

CLOSING

At Tiny Tots we acknowledge that the parents are the child's first teachers. We respect each family's parenting style, culture, and religion. We focus on building long term, trusted relationships which both family and staff will lean on if difficult situations arise. We work together with families to ensure that their child is happy, healthy, and learning both the academic and social skills needed to be productive members of our community.