



Branching Out for Learning

Parent Handbook

**6363 Research Forest Drive
The Woodlands, Texas 77381
936-273-2230**



Dear Parents,

Welcome to The Climbing Tree. We are honored that you are entrusting our staff to provide a safe, loving, and rich foundation for your child. The early childhood years have long been recognized as extremely important in the development of a child. Our field continues to grow as ongoing research supports the difference a quality preschool and positive early childhood experiences can make in your child's development. Our goal is to create an environment where children feel loved and special for their uniqueness. Each day will be filled with fun and exciting adventures to help your child develop cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually. We will set the stage for each child to build self-confidence while achieving educational and social success in a Christian environment. Our goal is for the children to be confident, joyful learners. We look forward to getting to know your child as we partner with you in these early years.

Blessings,

Laura Hickey
Program Director

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Train up a child
in the way he should go and when he is old
he will not depart from it.
Proverbs 22:6

Vision Statement

The Climbing Tree is a non-profit program of Christ Church United Methodist. Our purpose is to reflect the highest values and the best of care while providing quality education for young children. Everyday classroom experiences will be interpreted in ways consistent with a Christian atmosphere. Children of all faiths are welcome.

The Climbing Tree does not discriminate against race, religion, gender or ethnicity for enrollment in our programs.

Licensing Standards

The Climbing Tree meets or exceeds all standards set by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and is fully licensed as required by state regulations. A copy of the Minimum Standards for Child Care is on site for parents to review. Additionally, the most recent Licensing inspection report is posted in our Climbing Tree office.

Licensed programs are required to provide parents with information about product safety recalls. You may access this and other important information at www.cpsc.gov.

To contact our local licensing office, please call 936-525-2187 or 936-441-1775 or visit 2017 N. Frazier Ste. C1, Conroe, Texas 77301. To report suspected child abuse, please dial 1-800-252-5400. Information is also available at the Protective and Regulatory Website www.dfps.state.tx.us.com

The Children's Education Center Administrative Staff

The Climbing Tree

936-273-2230

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Registration and Enrollment

Registration for The Climbing Tree is year-round. A one-time, non-refundable family registration fee is due at the time of enrollment. Prior to a child beginning our program, appropriate records must be on file under the direction of the Texas Protective and Regulatory Services which oversees Child Care Licensing. Enrollment forms required:

- Registration Form
- Emergency Form
- Introduce Us to your Child Form
- Watch Me Grow Terms of Use Form
- Permission and Release Form
- Parent Agreement
- Secure Facility Agreement
- Background Authorization Form
- Medical Release Form and Current Immunizations **both signed** by your child's physician
- Vision and Hearing Screenings (4s and 5s only)
- EFT Payment Agreement Form (optional)
- Allergy and Asthma Action Plan (if applicable)

Fees

Tuition

Payments are due the first of each month and considered late after the 5th. A Late Fee of \$100.00 will be assessed to the account after the 5th of the month. If a tuition payment is late and exceeds the current calendar month, your child cannot return to care until the prior and current month's tuition are paid in full. Since TCT is a non-profit organization and operates on fixed expenses, attendance credits are not given for a child's absence; this includes childhood illness, family vacations, and holidays.

Annual Supply Fees

The Climbing Tree charges a \$295.00 annual supply fee per child. Supply Fees are due within 60 days of initial enrollment and are re-assessed annually in August of each year. Supply fees are to be paid in full by September 30th of each school year.

Payment

We accept payment by check, money order, or via EFT within our Sandbox Billing System. We **DO NOT** accept cash. Checks may be made payable to TCT (The Climbing Tree). Receipts are available upon request. Please do not send any money with your child. For your convenience, checks/money orders are accepted in our tuition drop box at the front desk. Checks that are returned for insufficient funds are subject to a \$40.00 fee. To ensure your account is properly credited, write your child's first and last name and class name in the memo section of your check. **Please do not place cash in this box.** You may also mail tuition payments to the school: The Climbing Tree, 6363 Research Forest Drive, The Woodlands, Texas 77381. Please contact the Business Director for any questions regarding payment.

Discounts

Christ Church United Methodists members receive a \$50 discount on their initial registration fee. A sibling discount of \$100.00 per month is applied to each family with three or more children enrolled in The Climbing Tree on a full time basis. This discount **DOES NOT** apply to summer schooler programs.

Additional Fees

Room moms may ask for additional party and gift fees. Participation is voluntary. The Climbing Tree fundraising events are also optional.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal is defined as permanent removal from any of the programs. We require a 30-day written notice prior to withdrawal. Withdrawal without written notice forfeits eligibility for any applicable refunds. If a family withdraws with less than 30 days' notice, tuition for the following month will be charged.

School Closures

The Climbing Tree is closed the following dates per year. Depending on the calendar rotation, specific dates will change from year to year. Please consult your At A Glance Calendar for specific dates.

- New Year's Day - January 1 and one additional day as determined each year
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- Good Friday
- Staff In-Service Training Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Wednesday before Thanksgiving
- Thanksgiving
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day and two additional days as determined each year

Inclement Weather

The Climbing Tree will be closed if the Conroe Independent School District cancels school due to weather. Parents will be contacted immediately if an unsafe condition arises when children are at school. Inclement weather days will not be made up.

Arrival and Departure

The Climbing Tree hours of operation are Monday through Friday 6:30 am to 6:15 pm.

Children **MUST** be in the care of an adult at all times. Upon arrival, your child must be left with a staff member. You **MUST** sign your child in on the sign in sheet in your child's classroom. At pick up, a staff member must be made aware of your child's departure and you **MUST** sign your child out for the day on the sign in sheet. It is the parent's responsibility to inform alternate caregivers such as babysitters or grandparents of these essential security procedures.

It is our policy that each child should be escorted to and from his/her classroom by an adult. Please instruct other children in your carpool or older brothers or sisters not to enter the room but to remain in the hallways. This is a rule for the safety of the children as the classrooms are arranged for safety and age-appropriateness.

Authorization to Pick Up a Child

Written authorization and a photo ID is required to release a child to someone other than the parent. Please provide a written statement if you wish to add to or delete from your pick-up list. Any person other than a parent picking up a child must provide photo ID.

Late Pick Up

Children must be picked up promptly each day by **6:15 pm**. **After 6:15 your child may be picked at the front office. At 6:15 pm our staff begins the classroom sterilization process and children cannot be present in the classroom. A late fee of \$20.00 for each ten minutes or portion thereof will be charged.** Chronic lateness may result in additional late charges and possible dismissal from school. Once you have signed your child out of the classroom, we require that your child be supervised by you or approved individual to pick them up at that time. Please do not allow your child to run freely in the halls, in and out of classrooms or through the building. Safety is our main concern at the Climbing Tree and children **MUST** be supervised at all time. If you are unavoidably detained, please call the school so we can assure your child of your arrival.

Car Safety

Your child's safety is our first concern. Please drive slowly and carefully in our busy parking lot. Please refrain from cell phone usage. Hold your child's hand when crossing through the driveway or parking areas. Each child must have an individual car seat as required by Texas State law.

The Climbing Tree Parent Parking

Parents are welcome to park in the parking spots closest to the school doors. If you have any questions, please see administration.

Illness and Exclusion Criteria

Children with fever, diarrhea, vomiting, other symptoms of contagion, or inability to participate in regular activities, will not be admitted. **Fever must be absent for 24 hours, without fever reducer**, following an illness before a child may return to The Climbing Tree. If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent (or other authorized adult) will be called to pick up the child immediately. It is imperative that emergency numbers and contact information are current.

Medication Procedures

Medication can be administered to children during school hours. A Medication Form **must** be completed by the parents with clearly defined instructions and dosage information. If your child has an allergy an Allergy Action Plan must be completed and signed by your child's physician.

The Climbing Tree Curriculum and Instruction

We offer a developmentally appropriate, Christian-based, thematic curriculum in each classroom. Children participate in gross motor play twice a day. Children also attend Chapel, Music & Movement and Spanish weekly. Our curriculum also includes yoga and sign language. Our extra-curricular activities include Boni's Dance, Fun Bus, Teams of Tomorrow (TOT) and Soccer Shots. We partner with families to promote the development and success of children in many areas; spiritually, emotionally, socially, cognitively and physically.

At TCT we provide excellence in early childhood education by providing a framework for best practice. This framework is known as developmentally appropriate practice, often shortened to DAP. This is an approach to teaching grounded in the research on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children's optimal learning and development. DAP involves teachers meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group; and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals.

Infants, Toddlers, & 2's = Wee Learn Curriculum (Christian-based thematic curriculum)

3's = Wee Learn, Count on Math, ABCs, Handwriting Without Tears

4's = Wee Learn, Count on Math, ABCs, Handwriting Without Tears

Transition = Wee Learn, ABCs, Handwriting Without Tears III, phonics & reading, Count on Math & ACSI Kindergarten Math.

Transition

Our Transition class is designed for Kindergarten age children who would benefit from a bonus year of school. We will also evaluate children turning five in the fall who have completed a full time Pre-K/4's program.

Toilet Training

The goal of our program is to meet the needs of each child. We recommend children three years old be potty trained. We **require** children four years of age and older be potty trained. Teachers will partner with parents to assist in achieving toileting success.

Special Needs

The Climbing Tree recognizes each child as a unique and special person with the potential to grow and learn. Our developmentally appropriate environment is designed to provide learning opportunities for a wide variety of abilities. We make every effort to accommodate children's needs.

Discipline and Guidance Practices

The purpose of all discipline and guidance is to assist children with self-management skills and age appropriate socially responsible behavior. Teachers help children express their feelings, cooperate with other children, and negotiate conflict. Only positive, non-punitive methods are used to achieve these goals. At no time will a child be physically punished, threatened, or intimidated. We recognize that young children have limited and highly variable abilities to manage their emotions and control their reactions. Expectations are clearly defined and consistently maintained. Techniques used are:

- 1) Diverting attention to a constructive pursuit
- 2) Compromising and negotiating differences
- 3) Encouraging children to seek alternatives within the boundaries of their individual capabilities.

The Climbing Tree makes it a priority to partner with our families regarding behavior. If the following behaviors are unresolved termination of care is possible:

- 1) disruptive to the learning process
- 2) destructive
- 3) causing deliberate bodily injury
- 4) using abusive language
- 5) referred to the center director repeatedly without obvious positive results

Our goal is to support children navigating through emotional, social, academic and developmental processes. However, chronic behavior issues will be addressed differently than normal age-appropriate behaviors. Our teachers actively document behavioral concerns. When there appears to be a pattern, the teachers meet with the Program Director and an internal assessment is completed. At that time, the Program Director may schedule a meeting with parents via telephone or in person to discuss the issues and work out an action plan. In the event the action plan is not followed, or it is determined the child may need more care than The Climbing Tree is equipped to provide, the family may be recommended to seek care outside of The Climbing Tree. Any violent or aggressive behaviors towards staff or other children will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. The health and safety of our children and staff is our highest priority.

The Climbing Tree administration and teaching staff make every effort to collaborate with our families to strive for each child's success.

What to Bring Each Day

Lunches and snack

The Climbing Tree provides a morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack. We serve water, whole milk and 2% milk. If your child has a dietary issue, we welcome snacks and lunch from home. These can be packed in a labeled bag/lunch box and snack should be separated from lunch. We do not have the ability to refrigerate or heat up food. We welcome the use of a thermos or ice packs to keep food at your desired temperatures for your child.

Infants

The following items should be sent to school for your child and **MUST** be clearly labeled with your child's name:

- Bottles with lids
- Breast milk bottles must also be labeled as "Breast Milk"
- Diapers Bag
- Diaper and wipes. Diaper cream, sunscreen and hats are optional.
- Pacifiers without strap (crib use)
- Pacifier with strap (non-crib use)
- Pacifiers may not have stuffed animals attached
- Sipping cup with a lid for older infants
- Multiple changes of clothing
- Snacks or Baby Food
- We provide bottle warmers and refrigerators in our infant classrooms.
- Monthly Schedule- a new schedule must be provided on the first day of each month. The schedule must include feeding instructions, nap times and any other special instructions or information.

Wobblers, Toddlers & Two's

The following items should be sent to school for your child and **MUST** be clearly labeled with your child's name:

- Diapers, Pull-Ups and Wipes
- Diaper Cream optional
- Extra change/s of clothing
- Comfort items (blanket, pacifiers) may be brought if needed
- Sipping cup with a lid
- Napper and Kinder Mat (Kinder mats are available for purchase through the school)
- Sunscreen and Bug Repellent

Three's

The following items should be sent to school for your child and **MUST** be clearly labeled with your child's name:

- Two full changes of clothing
- Napper and Kinder Mat (Kinder mats are available for purchase through the school)
- Sunscreen and Bug Repellent
- Comfort items if needed
- Pull Ups and wipes if needed
- Backpack (optional)

Four's and Five's

The following items should be sent to school for your child and **MUST** be clearly labeled with your child's name:

- Two full changes of clothing
- Napper and Kinder Mat (Kinder mats are available for purchase through the school)
- Sunscreen and Bug Repellent
- Comfort items if needed
- Backpack

What NOT To Bring

These items should **not** be brought or sent to school in your child's backpack or with your child:

- Toys from home
- Medicine or money
- Commercial or promotional materials
- Presents or other "delivery" items
- Tuition checks. Please follow procedures listed in this handbook.
- Candy or chewing gum
- Expensive or sentimental jewelry
- Glass containers in lunches or of any kind
- Drinks containing red dye
- Pacifiers with straps or stuffed animals attached
- Teething beads/necklaces/bracelets

If you have any questions regarding what not to bring to school, please consult administration. We would be more than happy to review and answer any questions.

Parent Communication

We value our partnership with our families and believe communication is key. Our methods of communication are as follows:

- Face to face with teaching staff and administration
- Teacher/Parent conference
- Telephone communication
- Direct messaging through our Sandbox Parent Portal system
- Email or fax
- Child Daily Sheets
- Monthly and weekly lesson plans, newsletters and calendars
- Incident Reports (communication of incidents and injuries)
- Social Media
- Handouts, pamphlets and flyers

Emergency Preparedness/Emergency Procedures

On a monthly basis the CEC program will perform routine fire drills. On a quarterly basis the CEC will perform shelter in place drills and inclement weather drills.

In the event of evaluation of campus is required, all students and staff will be directed to The Woodlands High School parking lot on Millennium Drive. All parents will be notified via our emergency contact system with instructions on child location, emergency protocols and pick up requirements.

Miscellaneous

Special Events

The Climbing Tree does not transport children. We schedule enrichment activities on campus. These events are listed on the At-a-Glance Calendar.

Water Activities

During the summer months the children participate in a weekly splash day with written permission.

Animals

Although some classrooms have pets, other animals may be brought to school only when the visit has been prearranged and approved by the center director. Parents will be notified in advance. Leashes and cages will be required where appropriate. When approved animals are on the school premises, we must have documentation and current vaccination records. This is mandatory for all animals entering school grounds according to state and local requirements.

Parent Visits/Classroom Visitation

The Climbing Tree has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to visit the campus and classrooms. During classroom events we require parents be responsible for siblings not enrolled in said class. Please be respectful of napping and quiet times if dropping off or picking up your child.

Parent Participation

Parent participation is a vital part of your child's growth. Each classroom benefits from having at least one room parent to help organize events and parties throughout the year.

Watch Me Grow Camera System

The Climbing Tree offers secure online access to view your child's classroom while he/she is in our care. Parents may register for classroom cameras at www.watchmegrow.com. Parents may inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that 1. video recordings are available 2. the parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own and 3. the parent or guardian of any other child in the video receives prior notice from the facility.

Clothing

Dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. Your child is active in school and has opportunities to participate in messy activities such as those with paint, glue, and markers. We are not responsible for damage done to clothing during school activities. Weather permitting, children will have outdoor play and should dress accordingly. For safety reasons we suggest athletic shoes are worn daily.

Immunizations

The Climbing Tree may not deny admission to a child based solely on the fact that the child has a reason of conscience exemption affidavit or a documented medical exemption for vaccine requirements.

Birthdays

If your child wishes to share his/her birthday with classmates, please make arrangements with your child's teacher regarding the number of children, possible food allergies and to coordinate the date. We suggest that you send cookies. Any snacks must be in the original container from a bakery or store commercially licensed by the Health Department. State Licensing prohibits homemade treats. We suggest avoiding excessive sugary items and red dye. Please do not send party invitations to school for delivery unless there is one for every child in the class.