



**2023-2024  
School Year**

# **Tiny Tots Preschool Parent Handbook**

*Providing healthy, innovative, and educational opportunities to unify our community.*

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## **MISSION, VISIONS, AND VALUES**

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### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Promoting Escondido as the City of Choice by providing healthy, innovative, and educational opportunities to unify our community. Energize Escondido!

### **VISION STATEMENT**

Dedicated to being the essential resource for an active, safe, and successful community, the Community Services team provides:

- Innovative programs that promote health and well-being
- Positive community partnerships and connections
- Opportunities to explore individual interests and
- Life-long learning and personal development

Resulting in an Energized Escondido!

### **VALUES STATEMENT**

With pride, the Community Services team upholds our civic responsibility in carrying out the goals and objectives of the Mission statement through:

**E**mbracing

**N**eighborhoods

**E**ncouraging

**R**esponsibility; and

**G**uiding

**I**magination to promote a

**Z**eal for an

**E**nergized Escondido!

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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### TINY TOTS PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

We believe that the preschool years are the foundation to a child's enjoyment of a full life in succeeding years. Their preschool experience should foster their emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development. Our goal is to provide a well-rounded curriculum designed to meet a child's developmental needs in an atmosphere of fun, respect, and understanding. We believe that optimal growth can occur when parents and teachers work cooperatively with one another in anticipation of meeting these needs.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The program is both child-initiated and teacher-directed, with activities that are designed to promote a child's growth and development. Children are placed in the classroom according to their age. Staff and parents will assist students by providing age-appropriate materials and activities.

Children learn through play, social interaction, exploration, and instruction. Daily activities include all these aspects of learning, both inside and outside the classroom. Classroom activities include, but are not limited to: music, creative movement, art, dramatic play, science, social interaction, cultural awareness, language, math, prewriting, prereading, outside activities, and field trips.

Our goal is to help develop the whole child in an atmosphere of courtesy and fun. We aim to create a classroom that will foster the development of self-confidence, responsibility, and independence. With supportive, positive guidance from staff and parents, we can expect to see these results.

### AGE-APPROPRIATE CLASSES

It is important that children are enrolled in the classes that will benefit them the most. Children are placed in age-appropriate classes that are designed to support them socially and challenge them academically.

*Little Tots* – A class specifically designed for 3 and 4 year olds to learn through a variety of first time foundational experiences such as social interaction, explorative play, and basic academic concepts.

*Super Tots* – Designed for older 4 and 5 year olds expected to attend kindergarten the following year, the curriculum is based on the common core standards in preparation for kindergarten.

*Please note that based on City Council direction, this program will end in May 2024 with no subsequent classes or follow-up programming. Families are advised to seek alternative offerings at the end of the school year.*

## **REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATION**

If your child needs accommodation to fully participate in the Tiny Tots Preschool Program, feel free to speak with the Tiny Tots Preschool teacher. You may also contact the Community Services Department staff for an [Inclusion Support Request Form for Minors](#). Please complete and present all requested information to the Community Services Department at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of class.

## **LICENSE EXEMPT**

The Tiny Tots Preschool Program is operated by the City of Escondido Community Services Department, Recreation Division, which is also known as Escondido Recreation. Tiny Tots is a public recreation program and not a daycare program, it is therefore exempt from licensing by the State of California.

# REGISTRATION & FEES

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## REGISTRATION

Priority is given to parents who enroll their child in consecutive months of Tiny Tots. Therefore, after you enroll your child for the school year, you will be eligible for priority registration for each subsequent month's classes held on the same days and location as your child attended in the first month of enrollment.

Priority registration shall continue into the following school year, provided the student maintains their eligibility. Please note the differentiated levels of registration year over year.

*Priority Registration* – Students in the prior year shall receive the first opportunity to register for classes in the following school year.

*Advanced Registration* – Students that enroll in summer preschool programming provided through the Tiny Tots Preschool Program.

*Open Registration* – Open to any eligible participant wanting to register for classes.

## PAYMENT DEADLINES & LATE/REINSTATEMENT FEES

Parents are responsible for paying all applicable fees by the associated deadlines, typically the second Friday of each month (see yearly calendar for specific dates). A \$25 Late/Reinstatement Fee will be assessed for all participants that miss the payment deadline. This includes participants that reenroll into the program throughout the year that were previously registered for the same school year.

## PROGRAM FEES

The Tiny Tots Preschool Program (Little Tots and Super Tots) is considered a yearlong program that is divided into monthly payment installments. Please note the following fees, see registration packet or recreation guide for specific detailed costs.

- Little Tots (T/Th) – \$138 per month
- Super Tots (M/W/F) – \$224 per month

## LATE PICK-UP FEE

Parents that are late in picking up their student from the program will be charged a late pick-up fee. This fee is designed to offset the added costs associated with supervising children beyond the program end time. Parents are allowed a five (5) minute grace period, then a \$1 per minute fee will be added as calculated from the end of class. If we are unable to contact anyone 30-minutes beyond the class end time, we are authorized to contact the police and have the student escorted home.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION FEE

Families are expected to volunteer in the Little Tots and Super Tots classroom a minimum of once per month. Individuals that are unable to fulfill this requirement will be subject to a \$20 Parent Participation Fee for each missed occurrence.

## FORMS OF PAYMENT

In person payments only accepted at City Hall or East Valley Community Center (EVCC)

- Credit/Debit Card: Visa, MasterCard
- Personal Check
- Cash

## PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Automatic Payment: Tuition payments can be automatically charged each month from your credit or debit card on the due date.
- Walk-in: You may pay in person at either the East Valley Community Center or the Community Services Department at City Hall.
- *Phone-in and in class payments are not accepted*

## REFUND POLICY

- If you are unable to attend the class after you have registered, you may request a refund or credit on account.
- Refunds/credit on account will not be granted for individual classes missed during a session.
- If a class is cancelled by the Department, you will be given the choice of a transfer (based on available space), credit on account, or refund without a service charge.
- If you choose credit on account, you will receive credit for 100% of the class fees minus any classes attended or missed. The credit will expire one year from the day your account was credited. Refund requests will be assessed a service charge of 25% of the fees paid for classes.
- All requests for refunds or credit on account must be made prior to the last class.

## CLASS INFORMATION

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### ARRIVALS

Please bring your child to school on time and sign in on the Sign-In/Out Sheet. The first class activity is designed to allow children to explore the classroom, socialize with friends and teachers, play with manipulative toys, and participate in other activities the teacher has planned for that period. This free-choice time helps children to feel comfortable and will aid the transition into the structured circle time that follows.

### DEPARTURES

At the end of class, the children will stay inside until they are picked up. Children are not allowed to go outside alone. Please wait outside the classroom until the teacher opens the door.

- Sign your child out on the Sign-In/Out Sheet.
- If someone else is picking up your child on that day, please notify the teacher when you arrive that morning. We suggest that you also discuss it with your child. The person picking up the child must bring a picture ID.
- If you are delayed and you are planning to send someone to pick up your child, it is important that you contact us. If that person's name is not on your child's emergency form, please tell that person to be prepared to show a picture ID.
- **Late Charge** – As previously stated, a late pick up charge will be assessed for students that remain after class has ended and not picked up yet.
- In the event that your child is not picked up thirty (30) minutes after class is over and no one on his/her emergency form could be reached, we will call the Escondido Police Department. An officer will pick up your child and take him/her to the station located on 1163 North Centre City Parkway. A note will be posted on the door for you with the name of the officer responsible for your child's care. **Note:** The above situation is a serious matter as it is considered child abandonment by law. When you pick up your child, be prepared to be questioned by police.

### SEPARATION

Adjusting to new people and a new environment can be challenging for a preschooler. Screaming, crying, kicking, hitting, and occasional tantrums are often a normal part of the separation process. We believe that separation should be accomplished gradually. If your child is displaying serious anxiety, you may need to accompany your child to help him/her become familiar with the teachers, classroom, and daily routine. We suggest that you be available "on the sidelines," allowing your child to come to you when needed. Soon, your child will be ready for you to leave part of the time and, eventually, all of the class time. It is always helpful if you explain that you will pick him/her up at a specific time or after a particular activity.

Sometimes the parent, not the child, is the one experiencing separation anxiety. Often the child picks up on this and will inevitably display the same anxiety. For some parents this is a real issue as there is always a concern that their child is in a safe place and under the care of responsible and caring adults. If this is the case for you, please call us and we will meet with you before your scheduled class time to discuss classroom procedures. We want to address your concerns and help ease your anxiety. Our teachers will be available to help your child feel comfortable in his/her classroom and with the new people in his/her life.



## CLOTHING

It is important that children enjoy all activities without concern about keeping their clothes clean. Please send your child in comfortable play clothes that he/she can easily pull up and down to use the restroom without the help of staff or parents. For safety reasons, your child should wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes for running and climbing.

## HEALTH POLICY

If your child's temporary physical condition will NOT permit him/her to enjoy all activities, we suggest that he/she remain at home. The following are general guidelines for keeping children at home:

1. Temperature of 99° F that began within the past twenty-four (24) hours
2. Undiagnosed rash
3. Diarrhea or stomach ache within the past twenty-four (24) hours
4. Constant nose discharge (thick, yellowish)
5. Ear discharge
6. Eye discharge or infection

Our facilities are not equipped to care for children who are ill. A child who gets sick during class will sit at a table away from the other children while we call someone to pick him/her up. Please keep names and phone numbers on your child's emergency form up to date.

Please let us know if your child is allergic to certain foods (peanuts, etc.) or materials (paint, playdough, etc.). We will ask you to give us a list of these items to be put on the teacher's board as a reminder. We do not administer prescribed or over-the-counter medication in the classroom.

## SHARING TOYS

Show-and-tell is part of our daily activity. Your child's share day is the same day as your helping day. This gives children the opportunity to share their toys with the class and encourages language development. We feel very strongly about toys that represent violence: **Toy guns, swords, and knives are absolutely not allowed in the classroom**, as they may encourage negative behavior in young children. Please use good judgment in selecting toys that you send to school. Wholesome, age-appropriate toys that contribute positively to children's intellectual and social/emotional development are always enjoyed by the class.

## PETS/ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Animals are not permitted in City facilities, with the exception of service animals. Exceptions may be granted to facilitate student learning, **but only with prior approval of your child's teacher.**

## DISCIPLINE

Our aim in discipline is to correct inappropriate behavior without hurting a child's self-esteem. This requires identifying the wrong behavior, speaking to the child firmly but kindly, explaining why the act is wrong, and applying the reasonable disciplinary measure.

It is important to define acts that constitute inappropriate behavior so that we do not discipline children unnecessarily. We need to remember that preschoolers are eager to learn, so most of the things they do are reflective of their curiosity. The "mess" they make during playtime, "untimely remarks" during circle time, touching other people's property, and climbing the fence are all part of the developmental and learning process.

Inappropriate behavior is one that causes physical or emotional harm to others. Hitting, pushing, kicking, biting, name calling, or making other children objects of ridicule are unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately. If your child displays this type of behavior on a regular basis, please let the teacher know so that she will be prepared to handle situations should they arise.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips will be scheduled for the classes during the course of the school year and may include walking trips, such as a trip to a nearby park. Other field trips will require parents to meet the teachers at various locales, such as an elementary school for a kindergarten visit or a picnic with a local farmer.

Children's safety is our primary concern so we require parent participation during field trips, with a ratio of one adult to every two or three children. Parents must sign a separate consent form for each trip.

## **SNACKS**

For both Little Tots and Super Tots, students are expected to bring a snack to eat during the class' designated snack time. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle with their snack.

Scientific research indicates that young children who regularly eat certain foods are at higher risk for childhood obesity and related health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. So it is important that we promote healthy eating habits at an early age. The following is a list of preferred snack items:

- Fresh fruits
- Fresh vegetables/dip
- Cheese and crackers
- Finger sandwiches (no peanut butter)
- Cream Cheese and celery sticks
- Graham crackers
- Banana dips (honey, yogurt)
- Jell-O or applesauce
- Cereal mix
- fruit bars
- Popcorn

## **ALLERGIES**

In order to raise awareness of potential food allergies in the classroom, please inform the teacher of any food allergies for your student. Out of an abundance of caution, we respectfully request that you refrain from bringing any common food allergens such as nut products (peanut butter, trail mix, nut-based granola). Should you have any specific concerns, please contact your teacher to develop management plan for addressing these issues.

## PARENT HELPERS

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Tiny Tot's is a parent participation program. Parent volunteers help to keep program costs low by providing additional adult supervision, assistance with material preparation, snacks/drinks, and other program needs. The following outlines the responsibilities of parent helpers.

### PARENT HELPER SCHEDULE

Parents are expected to volunteer in the classroom once per month. Please sign-up for your helping day on the calendar posted in the classroom by the first week of each month. *Note: If you are unable to keep your helping day appointment, please contact your child's teacher as soon as possible. The teacher will work with you to set up an alternate date. Parents that continually do not fulfill their required helping days in the classroom will be subject to the parent participation fee.*

### PARENT HELPER RESTRICTIONS

Infants in infant chairs and older children are welcome in the classroom during your helping day, provided they will not be a distraction or keep you from carrying out your responsibilities. A younger child (toddler age 18-36 months) is typically curious, loves to explore, and demands constant attention. We suggest that you arrange childcare for your toddler so that you can give full attention to the classroom.

### PARENT HELPER GUIDELINES

Parents should arrive on time on the day that they are scheduled to help. This will give the staff time to discuss the day's activities with them and use their help where needed.

Parents should be actively involved with all of the children in the classroom and during outside play. All scheduled activities serve a purpose in the children's development, so we encourage as much parent participation as possible. We especially encourage verbal interaction with children, as it is vital to their social and intellectual development.

### PARENT HELPER DUTIES

The duties of a parent helper may vary slightly at each location, so check with your teacher about specific duties. The following are a list of general responsibilities as a parent helper.

- Aid in supervising children during inside open-play
- Assist children with washing hands
- Assist with art projects
- Help teachers where needed
- Be alert and watch children at all times.
- There should be no less than two adults on the playground at all times. If you need to leave the playground, inform the teacher and someone will relieve you.
- There should be no sitting down in the playground area unless you are helping to comfort a child or doing a special activity.
- To avoid accidents or possible physical injuries on your part, do not give children "piggyback" rides or pick them up unless a child is hurt or in need of comforting.
- Do not allow cartwheels, round-offs, or any gymnastics on the playground.
- Discourage games that represent violence (Power Ranger, "bad guys," etc.).

\*Providing snack to the class is no longer a responsibility of the parent helper. Students should bring their own snack to eat during snack time.

## HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

The following are some helpful suggestions for effective classroom communication:

- Give brief, clear directions with concrete clues. “Hang up your jacket, then come to the table, please”; or “Please put the toy animals back in the red bucket.” Too many directions given at one time can cause confusion and frustration.
- Speak to the children on their level and in a positive manner. Bend down to their level and look at them in the eyes, especially when you do not understand what they mean. Ask, “Can you tell me in a different way?” instead of “I don’t understand what you mean.” The latter can be discouraging to children who are just learning to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Encourage communication among children. Often children will ask adults to speak for them. When this occurs, say, “I’ll walk with you to the playdough table, but you ask Billy to share the playdough with you.”
- Be positive when correcting or redirecting. Do not say, “Cindy, you left a mess on the table,” instead say, “Cindy, be my big helper and put your lunch box on the kitchen counter.”
- Always commend children for their accomplishments. Praises such as “Good job!”, “What a great helper!”, “What a beautiful picture you’re drawing” are positive ways to help build a child’s self-esteem. Be generous with your praises!
- Follow through with promises you make to the children. Our aim is to create a wholesome, trustful atmosphere in the classroom. When you say to a child, “I will play catch with you during recess,” please follow through. It is important that children know that the adults in their school are trustworthy. This will further create a feeling of safety and security.
- Keep conversations with other adults to a minimum, especially during circle time. Keep your volume at a low level so as not to distract the class.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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### GENERAL INFORMATION

Community Services Department 760-839-4692  
City Hall, 201 North Broadway, Escondido 92025

East Valley Community Center 760-839-4382  
2245 East Valley Parkway, Escondido 92027

### FACILITIES

Tiny Tots Preschool, *Don E. Anderson Community Building (DACB)* 760-747-3645  
120 Woodward Avenue, Escondido 92025

### PROGRAM STAFF

Miss Kathie, Tiny Tots Preschool Teacher

Miss Jessica, Tiny Tots Preschool Aide

Miss Nicole, Tiny Tots Preschool Aide

Kimi Cornett, Community Services Supervisor