

# THE JOSHUA TREE SCHOOLS PARENT HANDBOOK



2022-2023



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## **WELCOME**

This handbook is designed to inform families of the policies and procedures of the Joshua Tree Schools that are implemented in support of children’s healthy development, to comply with licensure rules for child care agencies, and to enable a successful home to school partnership.

## **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACT EMAILS**

Executive Director	
Director / Co Director	
Administration	
The Joshua Tree Learning Academy inc.	484-540-7541
<a href="mailto:joshuatreeconnectNL@gmail.com">joshuatreeconnectNL@gmail.com</a>	
	484-5407565 fax
The Joshua Tree Early Learning Center inc.	267-534-5296
<a href="mailto:joshuatreeconnect2@gmail.com">joshuatreeconnect2@gmail.com</a>	267-534-5304 fax

## **THE JOSHUA TREE VISION**

Helping children achieve the great “aha” moments of life. Committed to Teaching Children Through Music, Art, and Dramatic Play. Our enriching Arts curriculum encourages children to create, perform, and respond to the arts, and helps them to reason and understand the world around them. Art-based learning also develops self discipline, creativity, and confidence that will help children to succeed in school and life.

Quality learning experiences reflect the unique development of the individual supported by qualified educators to help each person to reach their full potential.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

The Joshua Tree provides a learning experiences through an Arts and Music approach to early childhood care and education. Our programs reflect the research-based understanding that Music, Art and play is essential to children’s health and well-being, and foundational to children’s learning. The Joshua Tree

Teachers nurture children, providing encouragement, protection, security, stimulation, and supervision.

## **CHILD CARE PROGRAM QUALITY**

The Joshua Tree engages in ongoing program quality improvement informed by metrics developed by and for the field of Early Childhood Care and Education.

Keystone STARS is Pennsylvania’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). A QRIS is a continuous quality improvement systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Keystone STARS is a program of Pennsylvania’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL).

Keystone STARS is a responsive system to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania. Our system is guided by three core principles:

- A whole child approach to education is essential to meeting the holistic and individual needs of each and every child and family.

- Knowledgeable and responsive early care and education professionals are essential to the development of children and the support of families.
- Building and sustaining ongoing positive relationships among children, families, early care and education professionals and community stakeholders is essential for the growth and development of every child.

We believe inclusion, diversity, equity and respect are foundational values embedded in these principles.

Keystone STARS has four primary goals:

- To improve the quality of early care and education;
- To support early care and education providers in meeting their quality improvement goals;
- To recognize programs for continuous quality improvement and meeting higher quality standards; and
- To provide families a way to choose a quality early care and education program.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The Joshua Tree Schools requires parents to stay informed about their classroom and center to ensure compliance with updated policy and procedures. To support communication for understanding, the following tools and strategies are in place:

- The Joshua Tree Website <https://www.joshuatreeschools.com>
- Electronic Communication through software app. This provides parents with classroom information directly by text or email. The current tool is Brightwheel. Participation is strongly encouraged by administration to support parents with classroom updates.
- The Joshua Tree School Events

Families meet to provide an opportunity for parent engagement. Content may include a Parent Education topic, a special assembly for Parent-Child engagement, or simple potlucks.

- Parent Conferences

Parents meet with their child's teacher for a 30 minute conference two times each year. This important opportunity to discuss the child's growth and learning directly with the teacher is foundational to establishing a respectful and effective

partnership. Parent-teacher communication is the primary co-held responsibility for families and teachers and strengthens their relationship and understanding. Additional conferences may be scheduled.

- Social Media

@thejoshuatree\_elc, instagram. The Joshua Tree Schools, Facebook Please follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter! (twitter coming soon)

- Verbal Exchange

Parents and teachers exchange greetings during sign in and sign out transitions and convey essential information. Longer conversations are scheduled for when the teacher is not directly supervising children.

- Written Communication

Bulletin and Electronic Boards, Documentation Panels, Incident Reports, Classroom Newsletters, Site Director Newsletters, The Joshua Tree's Quarterly.

## **APPROACHES TO LEARNING**

How children construct and apply their knowledge, through curiosity, exploration, initiative, participation, persistence, reasoning, resilience, and self-organization.

## **PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

As the child grows and develops, the body becomes more capable and competent through the integration of:

- Perceptual development – exploring the world with all five senses (e.g., mouthing a block, patting a ball, examining faces, listening to rain, tasting a new fruit).
- Fine motor development – touching, grasping, and manual manipulation, requires increasing dexterity and precision (e.g., grabbing keys, grasping a crayon, manipulating a pencil).
- Gross motor development – large movements requiring strength, coordination, and balance (e.g., crawling, standing, walking, pedaling a trike, pumping on a swing).
- Vestibular system – coordinates hand and eye movements, informs and supports balance and equilibrium.
- Proprioceptive – body positioning and spatial awareness, regulating sensory input.

## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Children develop an identity of self, expression of feelings, empathy, emotional regulation, impulse control, interaction with and relationship to adults and peers, and create a foundation for social understanding.

## **LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION**

- Receptive language – listening and understanding what others are communicating (e.g., identifying and discriminating sounds, recognizing voices, understanding intention and meaning).
- Expressive language – speech and other ways of expressing communication (e.g., gesturing, signing, babbling, speaking, drawing, scribbling, printing).
- Interest in print – understanding that pictures and symbols (letters/words/sentences) communicate ideas and information (stories, recipes, directions, books); awareness of environmental print; understanding how books work (e.g., English language books open right to left and pages are read left to right and from top to bottom); evolution of scribbles; representing ideas in drawing, scribbles, and printing.

## **MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

- Describe and explore relationships among objects and materials.
- Develop skills and vocabulary to measure, pattern, and express order and position (e.g., number sense, properties and operations; shape dimension and geometric relationships).
- Observation, prediction, experimentation, and analysis through engagement with objects, materials, people, and other living things.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play and explorations are an important foundational learning experience for young children at The Joshua Tree Schools. “Play in nature is especially important for developing capacities for creativity, problem-solving, and intellectual development.” (Kellert, 2005) Each child care center has a designated, age-appropriate playground. The Joshua Tree appreciates that our child care centers are located on walkable areas around the facility and great park settings and will take full advantage to engage the children with the public libraries, and beautiful neighborhood areas.

DHS requires that licensed child care centers ensure that children receive an opportunity for outdoor play every day that the temperature registers between 32 and 95 degrees. Please send children in clothing appropriate for the weather,

labeled with the child's first and last name. During a light rain, we may take a walk, so a raincoat is advisable. On snowy days, please send boots, hats, gloves and layers of warm clothing. During the summer opportunities increase for water play. Children are advised to wear rubber-soled shoes with closed toes and heels with socks for outdoor excursions.

Parents will apply a thick coat of sunscreen to their child every morning before bringing them to child care, especially in the summer. Teachers will reapply sunscreen throughout the day as necessary. Parents may choose to use bug spray on the child by applying it at home.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

The Joshua Tree Schools cannot assume responsibility or liability for any items brought from home that become lost or broken. The Joshua Tree provides sufficient learning materials. If your child has a favorite sleep toy or any other security item, please check first with the Site Director to make sure the item is allowed under DHS licensing regulation.

Items from home can support classroom learning. Please check first with your teacher if you would like to share a personal belonging that could enhance children's understanding; this may include an artifact, book, musical instrument, or photograph. The Joshua Tree asks parents to exercise caution when allowing children to bring personal items to class. Please check first with your child's teacher to see if there is a day designated for sharing such items. Please label all items brought from home to school. The Joshua Tree does not allow candy, cosmetics, gum, money, or toy weapons (or real weapons) at school.

### **DISCIPLINE**

The Joshua Tree embraces the definition of "discipline" as meaning "to teach." All human beings want to feel respect and self-worth and have a sense of belonging. The Joshua Tree does not punish children, we educate children. By honoring their interests and needs, adults will enable children to become capable, responsible, successful adults. Staff may never use any form of physical punishment when disciplining a child. Staff will not use language that humiliates and demeans children. The primary focus for teachers is to support young children's self-image as capable of self-control, verbal problem-solving, and responding to others with kindness and empathy.



## **DRESS FOR A DAY OF GREAT FUN! AND LABEL, LABEL, LABEL EVERYTHING!**

Children are advised to wear tread-soled shoes with closed toes and heels, with socks. Children should wear washable play clothes that support their full range of movement. Parents are encouraged to keep changes of clothes in their child's cubby (two, please, for infants and toddlers) in case of accidents. Young children feel powerful and gain confidence as they learn to manage their clothing. Consider pull on (elastic waist) pants instead of overalls or waistbands with tricky fastenings. This is especially important when children are ready to begin independent toileting. DHS licensing prohibits children from wearing necklaces (including amber teething beads) or any loose item (e.g., pacifier leash or clip) on their clothing.

## **TRANSITIONS**

Child care "transition" is the morning drop-off routine parents establish with the teacher for their child, especially infants and toddlers, to feel soothed and confident as their care relationship is transferred from the parent to the teacher. Develop a drop-off ritual to say "good-bye" and reassure your child. This can be as simple as: hang up coat, wash hands and hugs. A quick and consistent ritual with positive messaging is best. Coming back inside for another "one more hug" or sneaking out of the classroom creates a sense of mistrust in the child. Please know that children usually calm down before a parent reaches the parking lot! Children are capable of developing good management of their emotions given support, encouragement, and the opportunity. If teachers are concerned that your child is unable to be soothed in a reasonable amount of time, the Site Director will contact you for advice. Transition may also refer to the child engaging with a new classroom and teaching team at The Joshua Tree Schools. The majority of the children transition into a new classroom in June (some newly enrolled children may be accepted throughout the year as space becomes available.) Most children quickly adapt to a new classroom, especially if it is in the same child care center with familiar friends. When it comes to children and transition, be patient. Children's responses to separation and transition depend upon their age, temperament, and experiences. Teachers will quickly communicate any concerns and reach out to parents for support if they need it. Allow six full weeks before you assess the child's relationship to and experience of their new classroom and teaching team.

Always stay positive! How you react matters. Children have incredible intuition, they sense parent anxiety. Make sure you communicate to your child that everything is okay.

## **NUTRITION**

Parents provide 100% of the food offered to their child ages 6 weeks to 12 months (first birthday):

- Parents thereby control baby’s exposure to new foods
- Parents provide bottles already made up, and labeled with the child’s first and last name, to maintain parent responsibility for quality and portion.
- Bottles and foods will be warmed in a water bath.
- Bottles and food containers will be sent home “dirty” so that parents can accurately gauge their child’s intake and food preferences.
- Babies are held to feed until they can sit up at a table.
- Teachers facilitate hand washing before and after feedings.
- Teachers recognize that feedings are excellent curriculum and use these routines to intentionally bathe children in positive language to support children’s social emotional, language and early literacy development.

The Joshua Tree provides children (at 12 months of age and older) meals and nutritious snacks in the morning and afternoon:

- Children are responsible for washing hands, sitting with feet on the floor, using a sippy cup or a cup, and trying new foods.
- Teachers sit with children to model courtesy and proper use of tools.
- Teachers will encourage every child age 12 months and older to attend snack, but children are not required to do so.
- Children are required to wash their hands and join the lunch table.

Children are encouraged to try each food. No child will be forced to eat.

- Teachers recognize that meal time is an optimal curricular activity to reinforce children’s small motor skills, language development, and pro-social engagement as they identify as part of a community.

## **Food Allergies**

If a child is allergic to any food (or develops an allergy after enrollment) parents are required to take the following steps:

- Inform the Site Director by email (you will be provided with any necessary forms required by DHS licensing.)
- Notify classroom teachers immediately, verbally and in writing.

### **Food Related Conditions**

Parents must meet with their Site Director and provide supporting medical verification (a signed and dated note from your child's pediatrician) identifying the

condition (e.g., food allergy, Celiac Disease, Diabetes) and listing specific foods your child is not allowed to eat. Without documentation, teachers will not withhold any item from the snack or lunch service.

Families may provide an alternative lunch for their child only if their dietary restrictions (vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, halal, kosher) are not accommodated by the published menu. The lunch from home must be nut-free, low-sugar, no-chocolate and packed ready to eat or it will not be served. Foods will not be heated or refrigerated and must be packed appropriately, for example cold foods with an ice pack and hot foods in a thermos – children will be supported to manage lids. Food must be packed in appropriate portions in ready to eat containers and will not be diced, sliced, spooned-up or decanted by teachers. There is no tuition adjustment for families that provide their own meals and snacks.

### Sharing Food from Home

Due to complex food allergy management, parents may not bring in or order food for their child's classroom to be shared with peers.

## **WELL CHILD**

The Joshua Tree is licensed as a Child Care program by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Children must be able to engage in the daily rhythm of the The Joshua Tree program to attend. Parent partnership is necessary to comply with the Well Child Policies. The goal is to keep well children in school and parents at work. However, the health of all children is the priority over the inconvenience to one family asked to keep their ill child home.

Parents will report contagious illness to their Site Director as soon as possible and within the day of diagnosis so that the classroom can be informed and the illness posted in accordance with DHS licensing policy (the child's identity will be kept confidential.)

### Hand Washing

Hand washing is the #1 prevention practice in place at TJT to support health. By teaching children healthy hygiene practices, adults minimize the spread of illness.

- Parents will facilitate children's handwashing upon entering the classroom.
- Teachers will ensure every child washes their hands before and after eating and after toileting, including diaper changes.

## **Parent Partnership**

We ask that parents assess their child's health and wellness based on the child's behavior at home as a first indicator of ill health before arriving at the child care center. If upon arrival teachers identify that the child is not well enough to attend The Joshua Tree School, the child will be sent home with the parent. If the child becomes ill while at school, they will be isolated from the rest of the children as able. Parents will be notified and asked to come and pick up the child as soon as possible and within one hour. Children may return to The Joshua Tree School after they have been symptom free 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication.

The Joshua Tree defines these policies in an effort to protect the health and safety of all children enrolled in the program. Parents may not bring a child to school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms and until the child symptom free for 24 hours:

**Fever:** A fever of 100 degrees or higher. Fevers are generally an indication that the body is attempting to fight off infection.

**Nasal Discharge:** A clogged or runny nose with green or yellow mucus. The only exception is if the child was seen by a pediatrician and has a pediatric release note.\*

**Conjunctivitis:** Commonly termed Pink Eye, this condition is highly contagious. Symptoms include itchy, watery eyes or discharge. The child may not be at The Joshua Tree until symptom free or if the parent provides a pediatric release note.\*

**Lice:** The child must be louse and nit free to be readmitted to child care. A child diagnosed with scabies or lice shall have written documentation proof of treatment signed and dated prior to readmission, per DHS licensing regulation.

**Diarrhea:** This is especially of concern for infants and toddlers because of the risk of dehydration. The child may not be at The Joshua Tree until symptom free. Teachers recognize the difference between loose stool related to breast feeding and teething, and diarrhea; parents cannot negotiate on this symptom.

**Vomiting:** This is especially of concern for infants and toddlers because of the risk of dehydration. The child may not be at TJT until symptom free. Teachers recognize the difference between spit-up and vomiting; parents cannot negotiate on this symptom.

Unexplained Skin Conditions/Rash: Children will be excluded from The Acorn School for any patterns of small bumps, blisters and blotches (including: Chicken Pox, Fifth's Disease, Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease, Impetigo, Measles, Rubella, Scarlet Fever.)

The child may not be at school until symptom free or if the parent provides a pediatric release note\* meeting all the following components:

- ✓ The note dated within 48 hours of the day provided to TJT (presented on the day the parent seeks to readmit child)
- ✓ Stamped by a medical office
- ✓ Expressly stating that the child was examined by a physician
- ✓ Expressly stating that the child is well enough to attend licensed child care
- ✓ Expressly stating that the child poses no risk of contagion to the other children and adults in the child care

### **Medication**

The JOSHUA TREE Schools will not administer medication to young children. This includes pain relievers for teething or muscle soreness. Parents may choose to provide their child with pain relievers by administering these at home as long as the medication does not mask symptoms of contagious illness.

Children are often no longer contagious and well enough to return to school before they complete a course of antibiotics. Parents are advised to ask their pediatrician for twice a day antibiotics to support the family to easily store and administer the medication at home. In the event this is not possible, parents will come on site to administer the antibiotic to their child.

The Joshua Tree recognizes that some children live with certain chronic conditions under consistent pediatric management (e.g., asthma, diabetes, Epi- Pen for severe allergy.) In these rare instances, TJT will compassionately partner with parents to ensure needed emergency medication is on site and may be administered in a true emergency. However, parents are expected to manage routine medication administration in non-emergencies.

To administer medication:

- Parent must first communicate directly with the Site Director to request an exception, providing supporting medical documentation as requested.
- Parent will provide the medication in its original container with written directions on the dosage and frequency, with a signed and dated pediatric note listing the diagnosis and these precise instructions.

- Medication will not be administered to the child in any manner or for any reason except as stated on the pediatric note on file.
- Parents must update this note quarterly (or more frequently if asked).
- Parents have the sole responsibility to maintain medication and inventory it regularly to ensure it is replaced ahead of expiration. Teachers are required to discard expired medication on the date of expiration.
- Teacher will document every occurrence of medication administration, per DHS regulation.

## **DIAPERING AND TOILET LEARNING**

Toilet learning is a developmental process in which a child learns to use the toilet appropriately. Children are ready to learn when they are healthy, well nourished, and not pressured to achieve at a level above their capability. Parents partner with teachers, communicating frequently, so that the home-to- school approach is coordinated and consistent. By sharing terms and strategies, adults unite to support the child. As in many areas of child development, children must reach a certain age to begin (often between 24 and 30 months of age) or be in the proper setting or situation before they are ready to learn.

Parents will provide diapers or training pants. Parents have the responsibility to inventory supplies in a timely manner and replace these when stocks are low.

Parents will provide any needed creams and lotions for their child and will sign the appropriate authorization form to allow teachers to apply it. The product must be in its original container and labeled with the child's first and last name. Teachers will not apply ointment, creams and lotions to the child unless parents have completed the appropriate DHS forms. Parents must replace expiring products; teachers will not apply to children, and will discard, expired products.

Parents will bring the child in a clean diaper. Teachers check diapers and/or encourage children to use the toilet at least every two hour time block of waking hours. A child will be changed as soon as possible once a teacher realizes the diaper is soiled. Diaper checks and diaper changes are documented.

## **POLICIES**

### **Attendance**

The Joshua Tree School is open twelve months a year, Monday through Friday. Current hours of 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Darby location. 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Northern Liberties location. Children are required to be signed in at school by 9:00

AM every day to support their social and emotional development with a consistent routine (an exception will be made for pediatric appointments, with a note.)

Please inform the program by 9:00 AM if your child will not be attending due to illness or unforeseen absence. Please communicate planned absences to your Site Director via email or by phone and verbally to your classroom teachers.

The Joshua Tree is closed on the following holidays:

Independence Day

Labor Day

\* Thanksgiving, day after Thanksgiving

New Year's Day

New Year's eve at 12 PM

Memorial Day

### **Use of Space**

Please make sure your child is supervised by you at all times until signed into the program and placed with the teacher in the classroom. As you enter the center, take the opportunity to encourage your child's awareness of the displays that indicate upcoming activities and that document children's learning. Please encourage walking feet. Please make sure you close doors and gates securely behind you. Please do not allow your child to open doors, climb on furniture and equipment, or touch the adult tools on the reception counter. Your partnership to establish safe and respectful boundaries for your child is so appreciated.

### **Access Code**

Every family are not provided with the access code, which is changed quarterly. Parents must knock or ring the doorbell to gain entrance.

### **Sign In and Sign Out**

In compliance with DHS licensing regulation and to ensure the safety and supervision of your child, sign your child in and out each day with your electronic code – parents that fail to complete this step will be called and required to return to the child care center and do so. The kiosk is located next to the double doors as you enter the center. After signing-in, take your child to the designated classroom or area. Please help your child through the morning steps (remove jacket, toileting and hand washing). Parents must connect visually and verbally with a member of the

teaching staff in that classroom before leaving your child. Children may not be left in any space unattended at any time.

The adult responsible for taking the child from TJT School must be on the child's Emergency Information and Authorization form. A government issued photo ID is required of anyone picking up the child – please have it ready to show to the staff on duty as requested. The authorized person must visually and verbally connect with the staff member on duty and sign the child out with the accurate time and date they are being picked up.

TJT School has the responsibility to refuse to release a child to any person (a) who appears to be incapacitated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance that may impair their judgement to safely care for a child, or (b) whose behavior may, as deemed by a reasonable person, place the child in imminent risk. In the event of such an occurrence, teachers will suggest that another authorized

### **Tuition**

Tuition is payable in advance and due in full at the first of each month. Payments must be made by the Brightwheel app. There is a \$25.00 returned check fee. Parents will be notified when payments are past due and charged an additional 50.00 after the 5th of the month. If an account is one month past due, parents will be asked to dis-enroll their child.

### **Fees for Late Pick Ups**

In the event parents are unable to pick up their child and depart on time, the child's account will be charged a late fee of \$10 for every five minutes (or portion thereof) which is due and payable within 24 hours. It is recommended that parents arrive on site no later than 5:45 PM to manage their child's transition. Please understand the impact caused by parents that are late picking up their children: this negatively affects the child's sense of security and impacts the personal and professional lives of the teachers.

### **Inclusion**

The TJT School seeks to create an environment in which all of our children, families, and staff can feel valued and are empowered to participate in our community and learn from one another. In compliance with federal law, TJT does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, military service, covered veterans status, or genetic information in its administration of educational policies, programs, activities; or other University-administered programs. In addition, TJT does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their gender expression.



## **Special Needs**

The early years are often the time when children's special needs are identified.

Parents complete the ASQ tool <https://agesandstages.com/about-asq/for-parents/> twice annually to support teachers to better understand the individual development of the child.

- Parent attendance at the Fall and Spring Parent Conferences is critical to observing, documenting, and discussing the child.

The TJT School recognizes that appropriate supports can address a child's development and learning and will work diligently to meet the individual needs of every child, within the established framework of the licensed child care ratios, group size, and program design. In the event that a child's needs determine that an alternative learning environment would better support the family, the school will compassionately partner with the parents to ensure this successful transition.

## **Enrollment**

Applications will be accepted throughout the year. TJT actively manages a Wait List to accomplish full program enrollment organized by child's date of birth and date of application. A separate Sibling Wait List is maintained; siblings are prioritized as a space appropriate to their age becomes available.

To enroll, families will be contacted and offered placement and have two business days to secure the spot after completing tour or the family will be placed back on the Wait List and the next family contacted.

## **Disenrollment**

Parents are required to provide a minimum 30 days written notice or the financial equivalency. Children eligible for Kindergarten (turning age five years by August 15, 2020) last day at The Joshua Tree School will be August 30th, unless earlier written notice is provided. If parents of Kindergarten-eligible children choose to stay an additional preschool year parents need to communicate their decision to their Site Director in writing by April 1st to ensure space availability.

TJT makes a strong effort to work with families in crisis, to find real and reasonable solutions that will support children and parents. It is a DHS licensing requirement to state that TJT reserves the right to terminate enrollment without notice for the following reasons:

- Non-compliance with policies and procedures, including late drop-off and pick-up.
- Failure to submit required documentation, including updated immunizations (the child will be suspended from care until documents are received.)

- Failure to cooperate with the Wellness policy.
- Adults choosing to exhibit behavior that threatens the physical or emotional safety of the children, administration, management and teachers on site.

### **DISMISSAL POLICY**

The Joshua Tree reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. Any balances must be paid within thirty (30) days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30 day period will be referred to the agency's legal counsel for collection.

### **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition and deposit will be refunded within thirty (30) days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks and will not have their deposit refunded.

### **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES**

Upon arrival at The Joshua Tree, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom or arrival location. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the child care facility. Latest drop-off time is 9:30 am.

Exceptions are made for doctor or dentist visits with a note, or the occasional family emergency when notified in advance. No children will be accepted into care after 12:00pm to minimize disruption of lunch and naptime routines.

The Joshua Tree encourages a healthy separation routine at arrival. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. The Joshua Tree believes it is best for parents to comfort an anxious child by offering a kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child, ensuring them of your return. This will prepare the child for their departure. The teacher present comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of The Joshua Tree are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

At arrival, parents are required to complete the appropriate paperwork if a child must receive medication during the course of the day. Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or Director. These special instructions include but are not

limited to: Early Pick Up, Alternative Pick Up Person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

### **NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents are required to inform the center by 9:00am if a child will be late or absent on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the Director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our staff to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a need to know basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Director, so that the parents of the children in the center may be notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. The Joshua Tree will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law. Your continued enrollment will not be based on your decision to share the reason for your child's absence from school.

### **RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION**

The Joshua Tree reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause. The Joshua Tree strives to maintain an ample list of substitutes in anticipation of staff absences, however, there are times when substitutes are not available, and classrooms need to be closed to maintain compliance with licensing regulations. Refusal will be based on a "first come first served" basis when seeking to maintain appropriate staff to child ratios and/or when closing classrooms. Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

- Lack of staff to maintain appropriate Staff to Child Ratios as determined by State Licensing Regulations.
- The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
- Staff deems the child too ill to attend based on Sick Policy.
- Domestic Situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at The Joshua Tree if the child were to be present at the center.
- Parents' failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
- Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.
- Parents WILL NOT be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

## **BABYSITTING**

TJT discourages and prohibits employees from working privately for TJT families and assumes no responsibility or liability for employees after their scheduled work hours.

## **PARENT-STAFF COMMUNICATION**

Parent-Staff communication is essential to effective partnership. Communication provided by teachers may include: bulletin boards and documentation panels, Daily Notes (electronic or written), and newsletters. The teacher's primary responsibility is to supervise and support the children in the classroom; long conversations cannot be accommodated at drop-off and pick-up times and require a scheduled meeting. Parents are required to attend two Parent- Teacher Conferences each year. Additional conferences may be requested throughout the year.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

Maltreatment of a child is prohibited by TJT policy and the law. Staff are held to a high standard to assure children under their care are safe, and are required to report concerns of maltreatment by others. Training is provided to all TJT staff on identifying and reporting child abuse. TJT personnel (including TJT staff) adhere to Pennsylvania state law on mandatory child abuse reporting.

## **TEACHER APPRECIATION**

Parents coordinate teacher appreciation activities as a learning community. These delightful events happen throughout the year, with particular festivities in December for holidays and May for Teacher Appreciation Day.

## **PARENT CONNECT**

There is an active parent group called CONNECT that meets quarterly to support planning and coordination of teacher appreciation activities and parent engagement across all three child care centers. If you are inspired to volunteer, please connect with your Site Director to make your introduction to CONNECT.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Please discuss your child's birthday celebration in the classroom with the teachers in advance of the day of the event to create a special activity in honor of the child (favorite story, music or craft.) Many of our children have varying nutritional needs and therefore snacks including sweet treats are not allowed during school hours.

Any treats will be packaged and sent home with the child. The parent can decide if the child may have the treat.

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

The TJJT School understands that children, especially pre-verbal children, use physical expression to share their feelings and needs. An undesirable behavior indicates an opportunity for the child to develop an important skill; it is not a “morals” issue. Early childhood educators design the learning environment to support children with opportunities to grow these skills, intentionally addressing predictable early childhood “undesirable behaviors” through developmentally appropriate activities, class discussion, and individual coaching. Some of the learning materials in the classroom may include:

Discipline is an ongoing process embedded in the child’s experience and relationships. It is possible that some children may exhibit consistent behaviors that are detrimental to the ongoing safety and security of the other children in the classroom. This may include aggression toward peers, such as biting, hitting, and kicking. The TJJT School will handle these situations discreetly with compassion and in partnership with the family.

In the event that a child’s ongoing behavior at school poses a risk to themselves or to the other children in the program, the following steps will be taken:

- The Site Director will meet in person with the parents within 48 hours of the school’s documented concerns being communicated to them.

## **THE JOSHUA TREE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Executive Director is responsible for all TJJT operations and establishes TJJT School policies and procedures reflecting research-based ECE best practice and DHS licensing regulation, and conducts activities for ongoing program quality assessment, evaluation, and improvement. This position reports directly to the CEO of The Joshua Tree Schools.

The Family Services Coordinator designs and facilitates activities, programs, and events and new parent support. This position reports to the Executive Director.

The Education Director provides pedagogical articulation for The Joshua Tree School across all three child care centers, working in close collaboration with teachers to facilitate dynamic Arts and Nature Education, strengthening the practice of documentation to support, expand and deepen the thoughts and ideas of children, and makes children's learning visible to parents and the community through various strategies including social media. This position reports to the Executive Director.

The Site Director provides the child care center with leadership that reflects The Joshua Tree School's mission and philosophy, that is necessary to effective site operation, including staff management and DHS regulatory compliance, and that provides parents with the ongoing communication that supports a successful partnership. is responsible for TJT administrative operations, including The TJT School enrollment and tuition, Wait List management, HR and Procurement functions. This position reports to the Executive Director.

The Administrative Assistant partners with site administration to ensure policies and procedures are well implemented, provides the support necessary to ensure systems, materials, and supplies are in place to enable the child care center's function and operation, and serves the child care center with customer engagement by welcoming families and managing enrollment forms and maintaining children's files. This position reports to the Site Director.

The Lead Teacher provides care and education to the children, designs and implements classroom activities that reflect the values and goals of TJT School, documents children's learning, and provides parents with ongoing communication, including two parent-teacher conferences annually, to support a successful partnership.

The Co Teacher provides care and nurture to the children, working collegially with the Lead Teacher to implement classroom activities and achieve program goals, and supports parents with quick verbal updates during end of day transition.

The Floating Teacher provides care and nurture to the children in this flexible role designed to support teacher absences from the classroom and playground.

\_\_\_ I understand and agree that neither TJT, nor any of their officers, agents, or employees are liable for bodily injuries or illnesses suffered by my child(ren) or damages to personal belongings, unless the injury, illness, or property damage was the direct result of willful negligence on the part of those operating TJT School.

**AGREEMENTS**

I have read The Joshua Tree Schools Family Handbook and agree to comply with the policies and procedures contained therein.

(Please initial)

\_\_\_ I have thoroughly read The Joshua Tree Schools Family Handbook, available on the TJT website.

\_\_\_ I read and understand and agree to comply with the policies and procedures which inform the services providing licensed child care.

\_\_\_ I understand and agree to provide The Joshua Tree School with 30 days written notice of my child’s disenrollment or the financial equivalency. Children age-eligible for Kindergarten will be automatically dis-enrolled by August 30, (unless parents provide written notice by the prior April 1st of their intention to stay another preschool year).

\_\_\_ I understand that my child’s image will be used in photographs within The Joshua Tree School classroom’s documentation of learning (e.g., anecdotal notes, bulletin boards, newsletters).

\_\_\_ I understand that TJT has the right and the responsibility to modify practice to conform with changes to Pennsylvania Department of Human Services licensing regulation.

\_\_\_ I understand that TJT reserves the right to update this handbook at any time, to ensure compliance with DHS and The Joshua Tree policies and procedures.

(Optional)

\_\_\_ I give permission for my child’s image to be shared on The Joshua Tree School classroom electronic updates (including Brightwheel )

\_\_\_ I give permission for my child’s image to be used on TJT social media, websites and publications.

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature Date

A copy of this form will be maintained in your child’s file

***Voluntary Participation for The Joshua Tree Schools***

I am requesting that my family be included in Parent CONNECT I understand that my decision to participate is purely voluntary. I will leave the Family Information form (below) blank if I choose to opt out. I also understand that this information may not be used for marketing, research, or other business purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature Date

Child's First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Parent's First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_



Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Cool stuff about us: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_