



Parent Handbook

Together We Learn Early Childhood Learning School
23 Kettle River Drive, Suite D
Glen Carbon, IL 62034

WELCOME!

Together We Learn is an interactive preschool program. The focus is on family and the importance of parents learning together with their children! *Together We Learn* offers ½ day and full day preschool program options. Additional programs and tutoring are available. All classes are taught by certified teachers, use of an integrated curriculum, and always include ideas and activities for parents to share at home to foster the importance of learning together. Thank you so much for your interest in our school! We look forward to getting to know you and your child! We are always here to meet the individual needs of every child and help parents continue education at home through social, physical, intellectual and emotional development. Remember parents are a child's first teacher! Together we play, together we grow, and together we learn!

Sincerely,

Carrie Mosella and Cassandra Bender (Owners)

Mission Statement/Our Commitment

Our mission is to set the foundation for a lifetime of learning. We will offer a diverse and inclusive program that caters to our community. We will teach readiness for future school experiences, by providing an enriched curriculum taught by early childhood specialists in a safe, fun and positive environment. Our goal is to emphasize and educate the importance of child and parent learning together, by providing parents/care givers knowledge to reinforce learning in the home. Communication with parents is one of our main priorities. We offer open communication through meetings, phone calls and e-mail with our teachers. Our main goal is the success and growth of your child while keeping the focus on parent and family involvement.

Goals

- Set the foundation for a lifetime of learning
- To increase the parents knowledge of child development and its stages
- To encourage and promote educational reinforcement at home by providing fun activities, games, songs, etc...
- To prepare students for future school readiness
- To provide a fun, comfortable, positive and safe educational atmosphere in order to promote learning
- To set students up to succeed by providing positive reinforcement and praise to encourage self worth
- To have an integrated curriculum that promotes creativity, social skills and problem solving
- To understand that every child has a unique learning style and to teach to his or her individual needs.
- To assess student progress according to the Illinois State Standards
- To develop children's portfolios to monitor progress and share with parents
- To hold parent teacher conferences twice a year to encourage parent involvement in student's progress
- To develop a partnership within our community
- To offer parent-child events to encourage learning together

General Information

Together We Learn is a licensed preschool in the state of Illinois. We are open 12 months out of the year, Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. We offer preschool and pre-k classes from September to May and offer camps throughout the months of June, July and August

Insurance Coverage

Together We Learn is fully insured for \$300,000 per Illinois State requirement.

Registration Fee

Registration fees are due upon enrolling. This annual fee of \$175 is due every year and is used to replenish equipment, books and materials for the classroom. If enrolling for the following school year, registration and first month's tuition are required to hold your spot. Registration for families just interested in summer is \$100.

Tuition Payments and Fees

Monthly tuition is collected through tuition express, our automated payment processing service. This is a mandatory service. Tuition and fee payments will be paid automatically on the first of each month or on a schedule we both agree upon. *Together We Learn* can produce a receipt or you can choose to receive an instant email notification. Your personal account information is safe with tuition express. Automatic payments have proven safer than writing checks and eliminate potential check fraud or identify theft.

Tuition for the month will be the same month to month regardless of school holidays, child illnesses, vacation time or school closings due to inclement weather.

There will be late fee charges for children that are not picked up by their scheduled time. The charge is \$35.00 for the first 15 minutes and an additional \$2.00 per minute thereafter. Management will attempt to reach parents and/or any approved emergency pick-up individuals thirty minutes after designated pick-up time, if no one has been reached and there has been no communication from the parent, management will call the appropriate child welfare authorities. No exceptions. *Together We Learn* understands emergencies come up; please have back up plans in place.

There will be other fees throughout the school year for various activities and supplies. The parent will be required to buy the children their supplies prior to the first day of school. Parents can pick up a supply list from the Owners or on our website, www.twlinc.org. You will receive a letter informing you if any of your child's supplies need to be replenished throughout the year. In addition, we will also offer various activities that may require additional payment all of which are not mandatory.

Discounts

Together We Learn offers a 10% discount to families that have 2 children enrolled in our program and a 15% discount for 3 children. In addition, if a family pays for the yearly tuition in full, they will receive a 5% discount.

Withdrawal

A two-week written notice is required for withdrawing for any circumstance. Failure to provide a written notice will result in terminating the rest of your tuition for the month and you will be charged for the two weeks. When a two weeks notice is given any additional money will be refunded within 60 days.

Registration Packet

Each family is required to fill out the registration packet prior to starting. The registration packet will include child information and history, emergency numbers, child pick-up information, medical form to include physical and immunization records on DCFS form only, birth certificate, annual contract and all other required signatures.

Drop Off, Pick-up and Release of Children

****See Covid-19 Addendum**

Upon arrival of school, parents must sign in at the front desk, with name and time of arrival. When students enter the classroom, they will be required to wash their hands. Teachers will again take attendance when circle time starts in the morning. *Together We Learn* requires all students to arrive by 9:30 a.m. Please call the school prior to 9:30 a.m. for morning or full day students to let us know of any absences and the reason the child is absent.

Please remember that it is normal for some children to have difficulty at drop-off. It is important for your child's growth to make the departure quick and cheerful! Make sure to tell your child goodbye and that you will be back to pick them up! A quick hug and kiss is always good too! With our experience, children always calm down right after parents leave! Feel free to call in periodically to check on your child's progress.

When returning to pick up children make sure to sign your child out at the front desk. Pick up is as follows:

- Preschool Classes A.M (Tadpoles/Frogs) - 12:00
- Pre-K A.M. (Butterfly) - 12:05
- Pre- K A.M. (Caterpillar) - 12:15
- Preschool/Pre-K Full Day - 3:00 p.m.
- Extended care hours are: 7:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

All parents are encouraged to come in and discuss as a group what we learned as a class and what to work on at home. Children will be dismissed as a group after review.

In the registration packet you will be required to list three additional people who may pick up your child from school. At pick-up they will be required to show ID. Anyone that may pick up the child that is not on the list must also provide ID along with a verbal or written statement from the parent letting management know.

Doors will remain locked at all times. We will have a key code box for the parents to enter a code for entry. If a parent or visitor needs to enter the building while school is in session they will have to ring the doorbell. If you know in advance that you will be coming early or late please let your child's teacher know as soon as possible.

Visitor Policy

****See Covid-19 Addendum**

Again, if a visitor needs to enter the building while school is in session they will have to ring the doorbell as the doors will be locked. All visitors will be pre-approved by management and parents will know in advance when we have visitors in the school. Visitors will be required to show identification and wear a visitor badge.

Parents as visitors: We encourage parents to visit the center to observe and participate in their child's experience. Parents may visit the school without any appointment and during any time we are opened.

Preschool and Pre-K Yearly Schedule 23/24

Our school year begins on Tuesday, September 5, 2023 and ends Thursday, May 23, 2024. Together We Learn is open Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. **WE WILL BE CLOSED THE FOLLOWING DATES:**

- Labor Day September 4, 2023
- Indigenous People’s Day October 9, 2023
- Teacher Institute October 30, 2023
- Parent/Teacher Conferences October 31, 2023
- Parent Teacher Conferences November 1, 2023
- Veterans Day November 10, 2023
- Thanksgiving Break November 22-24, 2023
- Winter Break Dec. 21-Jan. 3, 2024
Return January 4th
- Martin Luther King January 15, 2024
- Teacher Institute February 16, 2024
- President’s Day February 19, 2024
- Spring Break March 25-April 1, 2024
- Parent Teacher Conferences April 26, 2022
- Memorial Day Break May 24 – 31, 2024

- **We will follow District 7 for school closings due to inclement weather including closing for cold weather, we will notify parents by e-mail. For an emergency closing we will notify parents by phone.**
- **Field Trip: We are CLOSED on field trip days.**
 - September, TBD - Liberty Apple Orchard
- **Our school pictures/winter program/spring program/graduation ceremony have not been planned or scheduled. We will have more information as time get’s closer to these dates.**
- **OPEN HOUSE - Our Open House is scheduled for August 31st - We will be sending a SIGNUP GENIUS to sign up for specific times. You will be given a 15-minute window to drop off supplies and visit your child’s classroom.**

Special Days:

- Grandparent’s Day – September 11th and 12th
- Halloween Parties – October 26th and 27th
- Thanksgiving Day Feast – November 20th and 21st
- Holiday Parties – December 19th and 20th
- Winter Program – February 1st and 2nd (videod)
- Valentine’s Day Parties – February 13th and 14th
- Easter Egg Hunt – March 21st and 22nd
- Donuts with Dad – April 11th and 12th
- Muffins with Mom- May 9th and 10th
- Pre-K Graduation Ceremony – TBD
- Last Day of Attendance – Thursday, May 23rd

Daily Schedules

**** See Covid-19 Addendum**

Options:

9:15/20/30 a.m. – 12:00/05/15 p.m. ½ day option
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Full day option
7:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. – Morning Extended Care
3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. – Afternoon Extended Care

Sample Day: **** See Covid-19 Addendum**

7:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.	Exploration Adventures
8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
9:30 a.m. – 9:40 a.m.	Opening Activities – Morning Meeting/Music
9:40 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.	Circle Time/Weather/PAT
10:05 a.m. – 10:35 a.m.	Outside Time
10:35 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.	Restroom/Snack
11:05 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.	Daily Lesson
11:20 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Learning Stations
12:00 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Prepare for home/review/PAT
12:15 p.m.	Dismissal/Review with Parent for ½ day students
12:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.	Story/Rest Time/Independent Reading
2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Snack and Restroom
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal/Review with Parents for Full Day Students
3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Exploration Adventures

**** Schedules are subject to change throughout the summer.**

**** Phonemic Awareness Time (PAT)**

Preschool and Pre-K:

Our goal for our 3-6 year olds will be to instill a love of learning. We will prepare your child for elementary school by working on social skills, developmental milestones, listening skills and academics. Our lesson plans will focus around goals and benchmarks from the Illinois State Standards. Parents are strongly encouraged to continue the education we teach the children in the classroom at home. Parents are a child's number one teacher. Monthly your child will go home with an educational activity for the whole family to do together.

***All children must be potty-trained to enter into our preschool and pre-k classes.**

Show and Tell and Personal Items:

Your child will participate in weekly letter bags show and tell. Each child will receive a "letter bag" to take home and fill with ONE item that begins with the letter of the week.

Please leave personal toys at home. Toys being brought in from home to "play" with during the day often times will cause issues.

Nap Time: ****See Covid-19 Addendum**

Children will be given one and a half hours of rest time. During this time children may sleep, rest quietly or read quietly. We will allow sleeping children to sleep up to 2 hours if needed. Nap time is for full day students only.

Items required for nap time are:

- Cot Sheet
- Blanket

Items allowed for nap time are:

- Travel size pillow
- Small stuffed animal if needed

* We do not have room for full size pillows and full size comforters as blankets

* Pacifiers are strongly discouraged.

Clothing and Personal Items:

At Together We Learn we are all about having fun while learning! A lot of our activities are going to require messy materials! Please make sure your child is dressed comfortably and in active clothing that won't matter if it gets a bit messy! Also, please dress your child seasonally appropriate. Children will not be allowed to go outside without a jacket if the temperature is below 60 degrees. Hats and mittens are required in the winter months. Tennis shoes are recommended for safety but not required. In addition, children will have a cubby to store their belongings. Hooks will be available for coats and bags.

Outdoor Play:

Outdoor play will be offered twice a day, weather permitting. We will go out once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Please dress your child accordingly for the weather. Children will not be allowed to go outside without a jacket if the temperature is below 60 degrees. Activities outside will include walks, using the playground and other approved activities. When the weather is below 20 degrees including wind chill or if it is higher than 95 degrees with heat index then we will have indoor play only. On rainy days we will provide fun and exciting activities for the children such as puppet shows, scavenger hunts and free time.

Field Trips: **See Covid-19 Addendum****

Local frequent field trips will be offered in our program. When a field trip requires transportation, management will let parents know information one-month prior this will include type of transportation, departure times and return times. Each child will be required to have a permission slip signed. We will require parent chaperones for all field trips. If a field trip is canceled due to weather we will reschedule for a later date and have school that day.

Summer Camp:

Summer camps will start the week after Memorial Day break and last through the second week in August. We will be closed the last week in August through Labor Day. We offer weekly camps for ages 3-6. Camps will be Monday-Thursday and we will have FUN FRIDAYS on Fridays. Please see the office or your child's teacher for a calendar of important dates and the camp schedule. Summer Camp Payments are to be made in FULL when registering. A 2 week notice and withdraw form is required for a refund.

Meals

Morning breakfast, morning snack and afternoon snack will be provided as well as lunch. Menus for snack and lunch will be posted on our Information Station board and emailed weekly. Breakfast is served at 8:30 a.m. Students will not receive breakfast after this time. Children will be encouraged to try all foods served.

Food Allergies

Together We Learn is a NUT FREE facility. Additionally if your child has another food allergy and requires a modified diet, we must be notified by in writing from the child's doctor. Additional paperwork will be required for Epi-Pens. All snacks and birthday treats will be provided by *Together We Learn*. Birthday bags must NOT contain any food or treat items. In addition, items brought in for parties such as treat bags and games must not contain any food items. All items will need to be turned in prior to the parties for approval

Special Needs Children

Together We Learn will modify our program and do our very best to accommodate children with special needs. Students will be assessed and evaluated individually to determine if our program best meets their needs.

Illness and Exclusion

****See Covid-19 Addendum**

For the safety of other children enrolled in our school and the teachers we require that all sick children be kept at home for 24 hours after symptoms have returned to normal (depending on the illness). If your child contracts a highly contagious illness please let management know as soon as possible so we can take the appropriate measures to notify parents. No exceptions will be made. Children need and want the loving care of parents when they are not feeling well.

If a child develops symptoms while at school they will be removed from the other children and given special care until their parent arrives. Parents need to arrive within ½ an hour of notification to pick up sick children.

Children can come to school if they have an ear infection and are on antibiotics with no other symptoms. Allergy related sniffles and sneezes do not require exclusion as long as you have a note from your child's doctor.

Children that have any of the following symptoms will be excluded from school until the symptoms subside:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. A child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and before they return to the school.
- Fever with behavior change or symptoms of illness
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other signs of possible severe illness.
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours
- Mouth sores
- Rash with fever or behavior change or any other spots that resemble diseases including ringworm
- Purulent conjunctivitis (pink eye) until 24 hours after first treatment
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Strep throat and child has been without fever for 24 hours
- Head lice, nit free
- Scabies
- Chicken Pox
- Whooping cough, until 5 days of antibiotic treatments have been completed
- Covid-19 any and all symptoms

Medications

If your child requires prescription medication from an illness that is no longer contagious we will be able to administer. Written instructions from your child's doctor will be required and must be in the original container with the pharmacist's label. All medications will be kept in a locked box in the office. Parents will need to sign the medication log on a daily basis. We will not administer over the counter medications.

Minor Accidents and Medical Emergencies

Children are going to get minor bumps and bruises. Accident reports will be filled out for those events and you will be notified of serious non-medical accidents immediately following the accident. If the accident is minor you will be notified upon pick-up. Parents will be required to sign accident reports for minor bumps and bruises. Minor injuries will receive the appropriate first aid. All staff is certified in first aid and CPR.

A child that has a major injury that requires medical attention will be taken via ambulance to the nearest hospital (Anderson Hospital) where parents will be notified immediately and will be asked to meet us there. Please make sure we have the correct phone numbers for you and your emergency pick-up individuals at all times. Parents will be responsible for all costs incurred during medical emergency treatment this includes transportation, if necessary. *Together We Learn* is not liable for any sickness or injury of a child or their parents or guardians while they are at our facility and or participating in one of our programs or special events.

Discipline Policy

Together We Learn offers a positive environment and will always provide children with much praise each and every day. Classroom rules will be taught to all children in order to encourage respect for each other, our school and most importantly your child. A proactive discipline approach will be used by rewarding students for good behavior on a daily basis. This may include, stickers, stamps, visit to the treasure chest or simply a pat on the back. At times a reactive discipline approach will be needed. Our steps for our discipline policy include:

- Redirection - redirecting a child from a negative behavior to a positive behavior by guiding them to a new activity
 - Positive Reinforcement - acknowledging students for good behavior or for showing effort and improving their behavior
 - Thinking chair - If redirection and positive reinforcement do not correct the behavior the student may be asked to sit in the thinking chair for the age appropriate amount of time to think about their choice.
 - Behavior Management - A classroom behavior management system will be implemented in the classrooms. See your child's teacher for more details.
- We will offer an individualized behavior management system as necessary for students as needed.
- We do not believe in or will ever use corporal punishment (shaking, hitting, biting, pinching, humiliated, frightened, or verbally abused). Children will never be disciplined for sleep habits, toileting accidents, food consumption or lack of participation.

Confidentiality

All records of children enrolled in our program will remain confidential and locked. Only the child's teacher and management will have access to these files. Emergency Information will be available to all staff. No information regarding the child will be given to any other individuals without the written consent of the parent.

Religious Observation

Together We Learn is an open faith preschool. We do not have a formal religious instruction but we will celebrate the normal Christian faith holidays. We will observe and celebrate all holidays of our enrolled students. We are open to information regarding specific holidays you and your family celebrate.

Emergency Drills

Emergency practice fire drills will be held once a month. We will also practice Tornado and Earthquake drills. It is important your child knows what to do in the case of any of these instances. It is also recommended that each family come up with an evacuation plan for your home in the case of a fire and that you talk with your children on the importance of home safety.

Pest Management Plan

Together We Learn, Inc. will strive to prevent unnecessary pesticide exposure to children and employees and reduce the need to rely on pesticides when managing pests. It is the policy of our school to only use pesticides when pests have been identified and their presence verified. Selection of treatment options or corrective actions will give priority to least-risk actions whenever possible to provide the desired control of pests. Education of staff, students, employees and parents about pest management will be included to achieve desired objectives. When it is determined that pesticides are needed, only products registered for use in Illinois will be used, and they will be used only in strict accordance with the product label. Further, only individuals properly licensed will use pesticide products. Our policy prohibits the use of any pesticide by unlicensed staff except to control stinging insects that pose imminent threat to human health on school grounds, or disinfectants used for routine cleaning. It will be this schools policy to make the appropriate notification and posting as well as to keep records of all pesticide use and other pest control actions. A copy of this statement will be given to every parent during registration.

Termination Policies

Together We Learn has the right to terminate a child's attendance for the following reasons, not limited to:

- Not paying tuition on time on a repeated basis
- Late pick-up of your child on a routine basis
- Required forms not completed
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Verbal or physical abuse from parent or child at anytime
- Zero Tolerance Policy regarding violent behavior
- Unable to meet and provide for your child's needs
- Failure to follow handbook regulations

We will give a two-week notice when we feel that termination is required. Those two weeks are paid in full regardless of the days the child attends. In some cases immediate termination may take place. We will assist in any other care arrangements that may be suitable for your child.

Revisions

Together We Learn has the right to make changes to policies and procedures whenever we feel necessary. Yearly revisions of the parent handbook will be made. All families are required to sign a new enrollment form each year. We may also make changes to tuition and fees. We will provide at least a 2-week notice of any changes made.

Authorization

I have received and read the changes made to the Parent Handbook (full handbook found at twlinc.org) for the 23/24 school year.

Parent Signature _____

Child _____ Date _____