



Parent Handbook

River Trails Park District Trail Blazers Preschool

**Junior, Senior, & Combination Preschool
1500 E. Euclid Ave.
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056
847.255.1200**

**Tiny Tykes Preschool
1313 Burning Bush Ln.
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056
847.255.1200**

Administrative Staff

Katie Halverson, Recreation Supervisor
Patti Mitchell, Superintendent of Recreation

Welcome! We are pleased to present to both you and your child the River Trails Park District Trail Blazers Preschool Program. We hope this handbook will answer questions you may have regarding our Tiny Tykes (2½ year-old), Junior (3 year-old), Senior (4-year-old) or Junior & Senior Combo programs. Please keep this handbook throughout the year, as it is designed to help answer any questions that may arise. If you need immediate assistance please contact Katie Halverson at 847.255.1200 or by email at khalverson@rtpd.org

PHILOSOPHY

Our Trail Blazers program is a developmentally appropriate program designed to help children grow and learn in a stimulating and nurturing environment. We look at the 'whole child' including intellectual, social, emotional, physical and creative growth. Children develop differently in each area so the curriculum is carefully planned to include activities that help each child learn and grow in all areas. Children will be introduced to the basic academic and social skills of preschool and will be encouraged to develop problem solving skills, self-confidence and creativity. Activities will include math, science, language skills, art, motor movement, music and dramatic play. All areas of each child's growth are important and we provide opportunities for intellectual, social, physical and creative growth. Activities are presented in individual and group, structured and unstructured settings. Our goal is for each child to develop a love of learning, tools to continue to learn and a positive image of himself or herself.

JOLLY PHONICS

Academically, our Trail Blazers program utilizes the Jolly Phonics curriculum. Jolly Phonics is a fun and child centered approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. With actions for each of the 42 letter sounds, the multi-sensory method is very motivating for children and teachers, who can see their students achieve. This curriculum is introduced during the Junior Trail Blazers school year, followed by an increased approach throughout the Senior Trail Blazers school year. For the Junior & Senior Trail Blazers Combo program, the implementation of the Jolly Phonics curriculum follows a blended approach that allows for staff to tailor the curriculum in order to meet individual needs.

CLASS INFORMATION

The Trail Blazers preschool is staffed with one or more teachers sharing the teaching responsibilities. The number of teachers depends on enrollment. Class maximum enrollment breaks down with the following:

- Tiny Tykes - 8 students with a 1:8 teacher/student ratio
- Junior Trail Blazers – 18 students with a 1:9 teacher/student ratio
- Senior Trail Blazers – 20 students with a 1:10 teacher/student ratio
- Junior & Senior Combo – 18 students with a 1:9 teacher/student ratio

You will receive a calendar at the start of the year. We do our best to follow the River Trails School District #26 calendar for vacations, holidays and full days off, but some exceptions may be made to run our program more effectively.

In addition to regular teaching responsibilities, the teachers meet weekly to plan curriculum and regularly with the Recreation Supervisor to coordinate activities, field trips, special events, etc.

CLASS TIME

- Tiny Tykes meet at the Burning Bush Community Center on Mondays/Fridays from 9:30 - 11 am
- Junior Trail Blazers meet at the Weiss Community Center on Tuesdays/Thursdays from 9 – 11 am
- Senior Trail Blazers meet at the Weiss Community Center on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 – 11:30 am
- Junior & Senior Trail Blazers Combo meet at the Weiss Community Center on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 12:30-3pm

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

Please walk your child into the building and wait in the hallway outside the preschool room. The classroom doors will open promptly at the time class is scheduled to begin. Doors will close approximately 5 minutes after the class start time. If you are arriving late, please check in with the front office in order for staff to open the classroom doors. Classroom doors will reopen 5 minutes before dismissal to invite you in. The teacher will give you a short overview of the class day; explain papers going home and any other announcements. Children will be called one by one for dismissal. Please notify the office at 847.255.1200 if you are going to be extremely late due to uncontrollable circumstances so that we can prepare your child. Your child may be taken to our front desk office if you are more than fifteen minutes late.

For both arrival and departure, students must be signed in and out by their parent or authorized adult. This procedure will be overseen by the preschool staff.

If you wish to speak to the teacher after class, please wait until all the children have been dismissed so you can have the teacher's full attention.

Let the teacher know ***in writing*** if someone other than yourself will be picking up your child from preschool. It is necessary to fill out the pickup form on the information sheet listing those authorized to pick up your child. We will not release your child to someone not listed on that sheet.

Please park in the parking lot and walk your child inside. Do not park in front of the building in the fire lane. This is for the safety of all persons using the building.

BATHROOMS

At the Weiss Center, there are separate bathrooms with child size toilets in the preschool room for the Junior, Senior, and Combo Trail Blazers classes. Children are expected to be toilet trained and able to use them independently. Please remember to dress your child in clothing that is easy to unbutton or snap. Junior Trail Blazers are allowed to be in pull ups until December if needed. At the Burning Bush Community Center, bathrooms are outside the classroom but a teacher/adult will accompany a child. For Tiny Tykes diapers or pull ups are allowed. If your child has an accident the teacher will call you to come and change your child or take them home.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Please send the following with your child on Meet the Teacher Day or the first day of school if you are unable to attend Meet the Teacher Day. Please do not put your child's name on the items as they will be used by the entire class.

Tiny Tykes- 1 color pocket folder labeled with child's name, 1 package of Clorox wipes, 1 4 oz bottle of Elmer's Glue, 1 package of 2 glue sticks, 1 box of Kleenex, 1 roll paper towels

Junior Trail Blazers – 1 pocket folder of their choice labeled with child's name, 2 rolls of paper towels, 1 box of Kleenex, 1 box of Crayola classic color thick washable markers, 3 small glue sticks. 2 packages Clorox wipes

Senior Trail Blazers – 1 pocket folder of their choice labeled with child's name, 2 rolls of paper towels, 1 box fine line Crayola classic color thin markers, 2-4oz bottles of Elmers glue , 1 package of Clorox wipes.

Junior & Senior Combo - 1 pocket folder of their choice labeled with child's name, 1 roll of paper towels, 1 box of Kleenex, 1 box fine line Crayola classic color thin markers, 3 small glue sticks, 1-4oz bottle of Elmers glue, 2 packages of Clorox wipes.

FOLDERS

The children will use the folders for classroom notes, flyers, homework, snack calendars, etc. Parents are asked to check this folder each day after class. This is the best way to keep you informed about classroom activities besides e-mail.

COMMUNICATION

We ask that each family provide us with an e-mail address that they check regularly for communication. For Junior and Senior Trail Blazers, bi-weekly updates about each class will be sent by the teachers through e-mail. The bi-weekly update will have a brief listing of classroom activities for the week, a look ahead and any additional notes that may be important. For daily notes and information, please check the bulletin board outside the room. Our program does utilize Shutterfly to share photos with preschool families. Your instructor will provide your class's Shutterfly information.

BACKPACKS

We ask that your Trail Blazer bring a full size backpack or school bag. Backpacks make it easier for them to take their papers and art projects home. Please put their name or initials inside the backpack. For Junior and Senior Trails Blazers they are hung on hooks in the classroom. Tiny Tykes are placed on hangers with their coats.

WATER BOTTLES

We ask that you send a re-useable water bottle to class and please write your child's name on the water bottle. The children will use their own water bottle during snack time.

HEALTH / ABSENCES

If your child does not feel well, please keep him/her home and notify the Weiss Center office 847.255.1200 at the time class should start. If your child contracts a communicable disease, notify the teacher or the office immediately. All parents will be notified as soon as possible. When releasing this information, the child's name will be confidential. Tiny Tykes parents, please e-mail Miss Sally or the Recreation Supervisor if your child will not be in class.

If instructors feel that your child is sick and should not be in class, they will use their discretion regarding whether or not to send your child home.

WHEN TO KEEP A SICK CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL.....

- a moderate fever
- sore, red throat, earache or swollen glands
- any undiagnosed rash or skin eruption
- nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- eyes that appear reddened and/or are crusted
- coughing, sniffing or a runny nose
- strep throat
- pink-eye with discharge

DRESS

Please dress your child in comfortable, washable play clothes. There are many different art activities that tend to be messy. Children will enjoy the program more if they do not need to worry about their clothing. All removable clothing should be marked with your child's name (including boots). Name tags or permanent marker can be used. Gym shoes or play shoes, (rubber soled shoes), should be worn at all times for your child's safety.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We ask that children do not bring personal belongings such as toys, books, etc. to school. We cannot be responsible for them. We have learned that these will cause sharing problems and tears if things are lost or left at school. From time to time we will schedule show and tell days and encourage your child to bring something at that time to share with the class.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES

We offer several classes immediately following our Tiny Tykes, Junior and Senior Trail Blazers classes. These same classes are also available to the Junior & Senior Trail Blazers Combo class and can serve as enrichment classes offered immediately before the core preschool program begins. These classes are a great option for families looking to extend their child's day and expose them to a more specific area of focus. These classes are offered in a variety of areas such as cooking, science, nature, athletics, art, and more. If you register for these classes, teachers will escort your child to the designated area where the class will meet. Registration for these classes can be done at the Weiss Center office or thru www.rtpd.org

BAD WEATHER DAYS

The park district will notify you if preschool is cancelled. The park district does **NOT** always cancel classes when the school district cancels school.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The teachers will complete progress reports two times during the course of the year for Junior and Senior Trail Blazers. These reports are not a scholastic indication. They are simply assessing what the teachers see of your child's knowledge, recognition of basic information, such as numbers, letters, name, address and their social interaction in the classroom.

CONFERENCES

Junior, Senior, and Combo Trail Blazers will hold conferences in November and February. The November conference is a simple assessment of your child in the classroom. The February conference will consist of a detailed assessment of your child's developmental progress. Teachers will post a schedule for you to sign up for a time to meet with them. Conferences in November will be 10 minutes, while the February conference will be more in depth at 20-30 minutes. If at any other time during the school year you feel a conference is necessary please talk with the teacher.

PROGRAM VISITS

At certain times during the year staff may need extra help with various classroom activities. At these times, teachers will post a sign outside the classroom or email a Google Sheet to ask parents to sign up.

If you have friends interested in our program, please have them call Katie Halverson, Recreation Supervisor, 847.255.1200 to schedule a time to observe class or to ask questions.

SNACKS

Each child will be asked to take turns bringing a snack. You will receive a monthly calendar that will have your assigned week for snacks including the quantity needed. We ask that no peanut butter, nuts, tree nuts, or products that have been processed in a facility that has also processed nuts be sent because of possible food allergies. We will give you a nutritious snack suggestion list at the start of the school year that you are asked to choose from. Children will have water at snack time in their water bottles.

BIRTHDAYS

We would like your child to treat the class with a "Birthday Book." The birthday child may donate a book, gift wrapped if you wish, that he/she would give to their class. This book will be read at circle time that day and can be donated to our library as a remembrance of your child's special day. We ask that you not send party invitations to school to be passed out in class unless the whole class is being invited. Otherwise, please use the Friendship List to mail birthday invitations. This way no one gets their feelings hurt if you choose to invite just a few children.

Birthday celebrations are welcome. Suggested birthday treats are store bought wrapped: cookies, brownies, donuts, small cupcakes or other finger food. Please **NO** cakes or large cupcakes or anything with nuts. Please talk to the teachers.

DONATIONS

From time to time teachers will ask for items. Watch for notes on the classroom door. Such as shoe boxes, toilet paper rolls, paper towel rolls, egg cartons, yogurt cups, margarine bowls/tops, stickers holiday or general, holiday paper plates, napkins, cups, etc. Any additional donations will be appreciated.

FIELD TRIPS

There will be field trips for the Junior, Senior, and Combo classes to gain experience outside the classroom. These trips will require a parent/guardian to attend with your child. Most trips are open to our families. Trips might have a fee involved. Parents should send payment at the time of the reservation. Payments are usually non-refundable, but refunds are at the discretion of the Park District. Field trips are optional, however, if your child does not attend the field trip there will be no class and no credit given for the days missed. If for any reason your child is unable to attend on the day of the field trip, please call the Weiss Center office. At 847.255.1200

STUDENT OF THE WEEK

Each week starting around January students will have a turn being the student of the week. When your child is chosen, teachers will send a "Star of the Week" poster home one week before. Parent and child can decorate the poster with pictures and fill out the questions. They may also bring a show and tell to share during this week. Have fun and be creative!

CLASS PHOTOS

The park district has arranged for a professional photography company to take pictures of the children, both individual as well as a class photos. Picture envelopes will be sent home about one week prior to the date. Parents are free to purchase packages of their choice. They usually are scheduled in November.

SENIOR T-SHIRT

Each Senior Trail Blazer will receive a class t-shirt with every child's name on it near the end of the year.

COLOR/SHAPE OF THE WEEK

The Junior Trail Blazers will be working on color/shape recognition. Each week a different color or shape will be introduced. In order to make learning the colors fun and to include the family, teachers will send a sheet of construction paper home and ask each child to glue pictures from magazines, books, etc. that correspond to the color of the week. When the weeks are complete, children will have made their own color book. The unit will begin the second week of classes.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

The Senior Trail Blazers will begin to learn letters of the alphabet. We will work on letter recognition as well as beginning sounds. We do this by playing games and having fun with letters! Each week we would like you to work with your child at home with the "homework" sheet the teacher has sent home. Please complete and send it to class with your child's name on it. We will end the year by making an "ABC" book. Along with these activities, your child will work on their *writing skills* as we introduce a different letter each week. Children will work individually with a teacher and on their own during free choice time in the writing center.

BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS

The following standards have been adopted by the River Trails Park District to be used uniformly as a guideline for disciplining any child enrolled in our Preschool programs:

GENERAL INAPPROPRIATE/UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS:

1. Abusive language
2. Disrespectful behavior towards staff and/or fellow participants.
3. Continuous disruptive behavior
4. Any aggressive behavior (slapping, punching, kicking, biting, etc.), whether it is initiated or in retaliation.

FIRST WARNING:

The first time any inappropriate/unacceptable behavior occurs, the parent will be notified by phone (or written letter if parent is not reachable). Documentation of this behavior will be kept on file at the park district. If that behavior occurs again within the same day, the parents will be called to come and remove the child from the program for the remainder of the day. **

SECOND WARNING:

If a child continues to display inappropriate/unacceptable behavior after a first warning has been given, the child will receive a written letter of second warning. This letter will state the child's inappropriate/unacceptable behavior and notify the parent(s) that one more incident of such behavior could lead to the child's last warning and possible removal from the program. This letter must be signed by a parent and returned. One copy will remain at the park district and one copy will be given to the parent. **

REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM

After the first and second warnings have been issued and an inappropriate behavior is displayed, a parent will be contacted by phone. A written notice that the child will be removed from the program for a certain period of time or permanently. (depending on the severity of the behavior). **

**In an extreme case of unacceptable behavior that is threatening to other participants or staff, the first two warnings can be omitted and the child will be removed from the program immediately with the final warning. **

The Park District reserves the right to dismiss a child whose behavior consistently disrupts the program atmosphere or endangers the safety of him/her or others. Dismissal from program is the final step. Discipline will include "time outs" from activities.

FALL REGISTRATION

Priority registration for currently enrollment students and their siblings starts in February before registration is open to the community. Registration opens to the community in March after an Informational Open House. Registration information will be sent home.

If you have friends interested in our program please have them call 847.255.1200 to schedule a time to observe class or to ask questions.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

When you registered, you paid a \$25 registration fee and gave us a debit or credit card so that automatic payments can be done each month. You can choose to pay for the full year. The monthly payment will be done on the 11th of every month from September to April. It is noted on the school calendar but you will not be invoiced. If not paid by the due date, a late fee of \$10 will be applied. Please notify us of any updates to your credit/debit card (i.e. expiration date of a cancelled card).

You may choose to pay:

1. Monthly (automatic credit/debit required)
2. Full Year payment

GENERAL DESIGN OF CLASSROOM

Our classroom design is rooted in the play based philosophy within the field of early childhood education. Our program provides a positive, fun, first learning environment where the 'whole' child is able to thrive. Classroom activities will facilitate a love of learning, develop self-confidence and teach children to problem solve through choice based activity centers. Additionally, both the Junior and Senior programs will utilize the Jolly Phonics Literacy program to further enhance play based learning outcomes.

Centers are set up around the classroom to offer different types of activities. Centers are changed frequently to keep curiosity aroused. The following types of centers are available:

*available in the Tiny Tykes classroom at Burning Bush Community Center.

*Fine Motor Table – Group activities such as board games and matching. Individual activities like puzzles, games and playdough.

Creative Art – Materials available to explore and create with. Art easels, tracing and coloring.

Gear Table – Allows for socialization and creativity. Children are encouraged to use their imagination while improving movement skills.

*Housekeeping Center – Complete with kitchen center, dress area, dolls, etc.

Large Block Area – Allows for socialization and creativity.

Light Table – Allows for students to conduct independent light and color experiments.

*Large Motor Skills (gym/playground) - Balance beams, hula-hoops, parachute, mini basketball hoop and other equipment are available to use for large motor development.

Lego Table – Children are encouraged to use their imagination while learning colors and fine motor skills.

*Project Table – Used daily to teach a specific skill such as using scissors or following a sequence of directions. Projects are tied into the theme or concept currently being taught.

*Reading Corner – Provides a rest spot for children needing quiet play time.

*Sand/Water Table – Provides experience with measuring, pouring, textures, temperature, etc., through water, sand, rice and cornmeal.

Science/Discovery Center – materials to explore, investigate and learn from. Theme or seasonal items.

Tot Playground – We have a secure, fenced area with a tot playground right outside the preschool room that provides easy access and a large area for games.

Writing Center – Children have a chance to develop writing skills with stencils, pencils, markers, etc.

JUNIOR, SENIOR, AND COMBO TRAIL BLAZERS GENERAL CLASSROOM ROUTINE

Monthly lesson plans have been formulated by the preschool teaching staff and are constantly revised and updated as needed. Lesson plans are developed into classroom routines that encourage independence, social interaction and learning through play.

Lesson plans developed by our Jolly Phonics certified teachers will execute the following learning outcomes: learning the letter sounds, learning letter formation, blending, segmenting and identifying tricky words.

Our year is planned out with plenty of fun, special events, arts & crafts, and educational projects in areas of nature, science, letters, numbers, colors, music and activities that emphasize motor skills development.

The following is a general “Flow-Chart” of the day. All general areas are covered each day however; they may be switched in order depending on the goals of the day.

Children are encouraged to enter the room independently and participate in activities that are on the tables.

OPENING CIRCLE –When all children have arrived, teachers will call children to the rug for circle time. The day’s activities are introduced at this time. This is when the children learn about the weather, how to dress for it and days of the week through fun, colorful charts and talk about the theme for the day and read a book.

FREE CHOICE TIME – Children move independently from center to center.

PROJECT OR ACTIVITIES – This normally relates to the theme of the week.
Examples: Seasons / Animals / Nutrition / My Family / Shapes / Letters

SPECIAL ACTIVITY – Large motor/gym or outdoors

SNACK- Our monthly calendars have the names of each child responsible for snack each week.

CLOSING CIRCLE- Story time, songs and fingerplays. Teachers and children talk about the day’s activities and what’s happening next class.

DISMISSAL

PARENTS INVITED IN CLASSROOM – Teacher will give an overview, highlight the class day, explain homework/papers, announcements, etc.

Getting ready to go home! For both arrival and departure, students must be signed in and out by their parent or authorized adult. This procedure will be overseen by the preschool staff.

TINY TYKES TRAIL BLAZERS GENERAL CLASSROOM ROUTINE

9:30-9:50am Arrival / Free Play

9:50-10am Circle Time

10-10:20am Art Activity

10:20-10:30am Free Play

10:30-10:35am Circle Time

10:35-10:50am Large Motor

10:50-11am Snack / Dismissal