



PARENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023

LICENSE NUMBER: 493009278

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Happy Hearts Preschool Program is child-centered, with a play-based philosophy. We believe children learn through active exploration in an environment that is rich in materials and provides opportunities to converse, socialize, work, play and negotiate with others. Our classrooms are planned to encourage curiosity, exploration and problem solving. We believe that purposeful play is the true work of the child. Through this play we view children as thinkers reflecting about their world. Learning to make decisions and gain knowledge. We provide this learning environment for 2 year olds to kindergartners.

We believe that all children deserve respect, love and attention. Happy Hearts Preschool believes that children learn best when they are in a safe, positive and stimulating environment; one in which children are allowed to explore and imagine the what-if's of the world. We strive to foster age appropriate development through learning opportunities that happen naturally through play and curiosity. Our job as early childhood educators is to nurture these opportunities.

During a typical day there are structured and unstructured periods, allowing children to learn at their own rates. Children are actively involved in experiences, which include foundations of math, science, social studies, creative art, language arts, music, movement and dramatic play. Happy Hearts Preschool considers all aspects of child's growth and development- intellectual, social, emotional, physical and creative.

We have a strong emphasis on the importance of Mother Nature. We believe that by educating the next generation of their impact on our planet- we can empower them to protect and care for it. In a world that has become so electronically driven, Happy Hearts believes there is great importance in raising children to care for the earth and have a love of nature and the outdoors. We celebrate each season and it's changes to nature throughout the year.

We believe that socialization at a young age is an important component to children's development. By allowing the children to problem solve and giving them the tools to do so in a positive way, we are helping to create strong interpersonal skills. We believe in the positive discipline method, first designed by Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs. Designed to teach young people to become responsible, respectful and resourceful members of their communities. This method "teaches important social and life skills in a

manner that is deeply respectful and encouraging for both children and adults.” (Jane Nelson)

At Happy Hearts Preschool our goal is to give children the tools they need to venture out and become lifetime learners.

It is our goal that each graduate leaves with:

- Development of a positive self-concept
- Acceptance and expression of both positive and negative feelings
- Positive ways of interacting with both peers and adults
- A high regard for the environment and nature
- Academic readiness for kindergarten
- Growth of creative thinking and problem solving skills
- Age appropriate problem solving skills
- Kindness & respect for all living things

PROGRAMS & PURPOSES

CA State Ratio is 12:1, for ages 2-5. We strive for lower ratios (see below), but at times may use the state ratio

Happy Hearts Preschool will offer four programs, with varying ratios:

- Ladybugs: ages 2 to 3 years old, potty-trained not required
This introduction to Preschool focuses on social skills, toilet training, self help, and classroom structure (circle time, routine following, clean up, etc). All while supporting child led exploration in line with our play based learning philosophy. **Ratio 7:1**
- Sprouts: age 3 (by Sept 1) and older, potty-trained
Our Sprouts will further develop school social skills, learn classroom structure, explore academic concepts, and strengthen self help skills. Invitations to explore both indoors and out, will allow for child led learning through play. **Ratio 12:1**
- Blossoms age 4 (by Sept 1) and older, potty-trained
As the final class before Kindergarten, Blossoms keeps small ratios while further developing kinder readiness skills. These include social and emotional readiness and academic concepts presented through games, play, read aloud, and free exploration indoors and out. **Ratio 12:1**
- School Aged (Grades K-3)

Afterschool, Camps, and Special Event programs will be available for children entering/in grades K-3. This explorative environment offers invitations for play, reading, building, gardening, field trips, and play indoors and out. **Ratio 12:1**

Once children are potty-trained and ready to join the Sprouts, teachers will assess based on observations and speak with parents about the transition (enrollment space permitting). Otherwise, we wait to move up in July for the new school year. When possible, including free play on the playground, all preschool programs will integrate to allow for multi-age exposure. In accordance with state licensing standards, School Age students will join preschoolers only for special events.

The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) lists the following benefits of multiage classrooms:

- Children are able to spend several years with the same teacher. This allows the teacher to develop a deeper understanding of a child's strengths and needs, and is therefore in a better position to support the child's learning.
- Children have several years to develop, and are able to see themselves as progressive, successful learners.
- Children are viewed as unique individuals. The teacher focuses on teaching each child according to his or her own strengths, unlike in same-grade classrooms that often expect all children to be at the same place at the same time with regard to ability.
- Children develop a sense of family with their classmates. They become a "family of learners" who support and care for each other.
- Older children have the opportunity to serve as mentors and to take leadership roles.
- Children are more likely to cooperate than compete. The spirit of cooperation and caring makes it possible for children to help each other as individuals, not see each other as competitors.
- Older children model more sophisticated approaches to problem solving, and younger children are able to accomplish tasks they could not do without the assistance of older children. This dynamic increases the older child's level of independence and competence.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

A key aspect to our program is the work we do through positive discipline. This work is some of the most important for children to carry with them on to elementary school. Interpersonal skills are taught by example, which is why our school strives to make all interactions with children meaningful. We believe that a relationship-based, positive discipline approach is the best way to guide children in our care. With this approach, we hope to create this relationship with each family at our school. In the classroom,

teachers look for the meaning behind a behavior. Is the child hungry? Thirsty? Scared? Upset about a change at home/school? The more communication parents have with teachers and staff, the better we can accommodate the emotional needs of your child. We believe it truly takes a village.

Key Aspects of Behavioral Expectations include:

- Children are spoken to in a respectful manner
- Children are always encouraged to use their words to solve problems, and teachers assist when helping with these disputes
- Positive redirection is used when possible
- Children are encouraged to identify their emotions using I statement (“I feel...when...”)
- Pushing, hitting, spitting, biting, name-calling, bullying and yelling are all unacceptable behaviors
- If these behaviors continue child will be encouraged to take some space and play separately from the group/activity and have one-on-one with a teacher as needed
- Children are not asked to apologize. Many times they are not sorry for their behavior and we would rather encourage empathy by using statements such as “what do you need to feel better?” and make amends using problem solving skills taught in class.

The school prohibits all the following: corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature. No action shall be taken that interferes with functions of daily living including eating, sleeping or toileting; or withholding shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning. These actions are prohibited. Happy Hearts Preschool does not engage in any of the above.

All teachers & staff are to follow the discipline policy. Any violation of this policy is grounds for immediate termination and reporting made to the Community Care Licensing and Child Protective Services.

Happy Hearts Preschool works with The Behavior Consultant Project through the Early Learning Institute when needed. We reserve the right to contact these resources if we feel it is necessary for the child to be successful in our program. Consent from parents is needed before cases can open. The school retains the right to terminate enrollment for misconduct if it is repeated, disruptive or threatening.

ENROLLMENT

A child must be at least 2 years old to be admitted to the school. We offer a multi-age learning environment, but with separate spaces for different ages as needed. Happy Hearts Preschool serves 2 years old to entry into kindergarten. Our School Aged Classroom serves children entering/in K-3 grade.

Our program is limited to 61 students at any given time and therefore space is limited. If no immediate opening exists, the child will be placed on a waiting list.

All forms required by Community Care Licensing, including proof of immunizations, and medical assessment must be submitted before a child is enrolled, children will not be admitted to school without submission of required forms.

PLACEMENT CRITERIA

Prior to enrollment, we require a child & parent (or authorized representative) interview. This allows for us to make placement decisions based on factors such as age, temperament, and readiness for preschool. We do not in any way discriminate against any prospective family on the grounds of color, religion, nationality, family type, or socio-economic status. We welcome all walks of life and appreciate a diverse, multicultural classroom. We understand that it is for the child's own benefit to have a strong fit for both the family and the school.

RATIO

The State of California mandates a 12:1 Child/Teacher classroom ratio be maintained at all times.

Happy Hearts Preschool feels that before the age of 2 years & 9 months, students need more attention. Our Ladybugs program will hold a ratio of 7:1, going above and beyond the State's requirements. At times, when needed, the state ratio will be used.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The school is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

MORNING PRESCHOOL:

- Ladybugs day ends at 12:30PM Pick up us at 12:30 PM.
- Sprouts & Blossoms day ends at 1:00 PM Pick up is at 1:00 PM

EXTRA CARE is offered if additional care is needed. Pick up is 3:30 PM for EXTRA CARE OPTION.

Note: Pickup time is strictly enforced. Failure to pick up child on or before 12:30/1:00 PM (morning), 3:30 PM (extra care) will result in a \$1/minute late fee for all late pickups. Continued late pickup is grounds for immediate termination.

SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES

The school offers supplementary activities to enhance your child's learning experience. These services may include: gymnastics, music lessons, foreign languages, art. These services are voluntary and are offered for an additional fee. The school will always provide parents with advanced notice of all services offered & allow for time to collect fees.

FIELD TRIP PROVISIONS

We may take field trips during the school year. You are encouraged to attend as a volunteer/chaperone. Some field trips will be walking to local places nearby such as the local library, Redwood Empire Gymnastics, and other areas of the fairgrounds. Field trips will always be scheduled in advance & require enough parent volunteers to safely leave the school and meet all requirements. If requirements are not met, field trips may be canceled. *Ratio for field trips is 1 adult for every 6 children

TRANSPORTATION ARRANGEMENTS

All transportation is the responsibility of the parent. Happy Hearts Preschool does not transport children at any time. Arrangements are to be made in advance if transportation is necessary for field trips or other special events.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Children will be photographed throughout the day as they interact. These photos will be used for classroom displays & projects. Documenting the learning process is an important component to our program. Happy Hearts Preschool retains the right to use these images for marketing, brochure and websites. If a parent objects, the school must be notified in writing

PARENT RIGHTS

Happy Hearts Preschool believes that communication is key in creating a positive community for our children to flourish. Please do not hesitate to talk with any teachers regarding any issues that you wish to address. Our school maintains an open door policy. A parent can call for a conference for any reason.

Parents or an authorized representative has the following state-mandated rights:

1. Enter and inspect the school without advance notice whenever children are in care

2. File a complaint against the licensee (the school) with the licensing office and review the licensee's public file kept by the licensing office
3. Review reports of licensing visits and substantiated complaints against the licensee made during the last three years.
4. Complain to the licensing office and inspect the school without discrimination or retaliation against you or your child
5. Request in writing that a parent not be allowed to visit your child or take your child from the school provided you have shown a certified copy of a court order
6. Receive from the licensee the name, address and telephone number of the local licensing office
7. Be informed by the licensee, upon request, of the name and type of association to school for any adult who has been granted a criminal record exemption, and that the name of the person may also be obtained by contacting the local licensing office
8. Receive from the licensee the Caregiver Background Check Process Form

Parents/guardians are required to review & acknowledge the receipt of the following forms:

- Personal Rights
- Parents' Right Notification
- Background Check Process

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Each child that is enrolled and receiving services from our school shall have rights, which include the following:

1. To be accorded dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons
2. TO be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs
3. To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical function
4. To be informed, and to have his/her authorized representative, if any, informed by the licensee of the provisions of law regarding complaints including, but not limited, the address and telephone number of the complaint receiving until of the licensing agency and of information regarding confidentiality.
5. To be free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice and to have visits from the spiritual advisor of his/her choice. Attendance at religious services, either in or outside the facility, shall be on a completely voluntary basis.
6. In the school, decisions concerning attendance at religious services or visits from spiritual advisors shall be made by the parents(s), domestic partner(s), or guardian(s) of the child.
7. Not to be locked in any room, building, or facility premises by day or night.

8. Not to be placed in any restraining device, except a supportive restraint approved in advance by the licensing agency.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Prior to admission to the school, children shall be immunized against diseases as required by the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, commencing with Section 6000.

As required by the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 6035(b), a child who does not meet any of the requirements in Sections 101220.1(c), (d) or (e) above shall not be admitted to a child care center.

The school shall document each child's immunizations and shall maintain such documentation in the center for as long as the child is enrolled. Records will be updated as required, when child is due to receive required immunizations.

MEDICAL ASSESSMENT AND TB REQUIREMENTS

Prior to, or within 30 calendar days following the enrollment of a child, the school shall obtain a written medical assessment of the child. This medical assessment enables the school to assess whether the center can provide necessary health-related services to the child. Such assessment shall be performed by, or under the supervision of, a licensed physician, and shall not be more than one year old when obtained.

The medical assessment shall provide the following:

- A record of any infectious or contagious diseases that would preclude care of the child by the licensee.
- Results of a test for tuberculosis.
- Identification of the child's special problems and needs.
- Identification of any prescribed medications being taken by the child.
- Ambulatory status

If a medical assessment is not available for a child and cannot be obtained within 30 days of admission:

- A medical appointment date shall be obtained from the authorized representative upon the child's admission.
- TB test shall be obtained on the child within 30 days of admission.

The parent or authorized legal guardian is required to complete and sign the following State of California forms:

Child Physician's Report

Child's Preadmissions Health History

MEDICATION POLICY

Medication will NOT be given to any child at school unless discussed prior to enrollment or if medical conditions have changed since being enrolled. Our school provides Incidental Medical Services- IMS on a case-by-case basis. This is to ensure the child's needs can be met at the time of admission and throughout the child's attendance at the facility. Please discuss with the director further if your child requires IMS. The school may choose to provide incidental medical services when the parent/authorized representative has provided written authorization and obtained written instructions from the child's physician. All medications and equipment/supplies will be placed out of reach in a locked cabinet with all forms on hand.

IDENTIFICATION & EMERGENCY INFORMATION

The school must have a completed Identification & Emergency Information form on-file prior to a child's first day. If this information changes during the course of the school year, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school and complete a new form immediately.

EMERGENCIES

If the school deems a medical or severe dental emergency, 911 will be called first. Parents are notified as soon as reasonably possible. For minor emergencies, staff will provide basic first aid and parents will be notified immediately. Parents/legal guardians are required to complete & sign the following forms:

- Identification & Emergency Information
- Consent for Medical Treatment

AIR QUALITY/FIRE SEASON

Happy Hearts Preschool will follow the AQI Index Guidelines. The school will close if the air quality reaches an AQI rating of 201, based on AirNow.org rating at 5 am that morning. Parents will be notified via Brightwheels App by 6 am the same morning. There is no change in tuition should a natural disaster occur causing school closure. Should new information arise, these guidelines may be adapted to align with best practices.

COVID-19 POLICIES

Please see a separate PDF of all Covid-19 policies and procedures. This is continuously updated as information changes.

PACIFIERS

We have found that children can often not distinguish between each other's pacifiers at school. We ask that you keep all pacifiers at home. It's best to prepare your child to not have a pacifier at school by helping them wean from it at home.

SIGN IN/SIGN OUT PROCEDURE

All parents/legal guardians are **required** to sign their child in and out every day upon drop off and pick up using the Brightwheel app. Parents must know their PIN number and answer health questions asked upon drop off, along with a temperature check. Repeated failure to sign-in and out will result in a \$20 per incidence charge. A full legal signature is required. Children will not be released to any person other than legal guardians, unless the school has received prior written authorization from the parent, naming said person as authorized to pick up. Said person **MUST** present a government issued picture identification.

LUNCH & SNACKS

Parents are required to bring a healthy lunch for your child. Please be mindful of the food you're sending with your child. We are not a peanut free facility, but may choose to if a child enrolls with a peanut allergy. We suggest at least one protein, two fruits or vegetable choices and a carbohydrate. Please limit treats/desserts. We do not allow juice, as we find it has too much sugar. We do not permit **CANDY, GUM, or SODA** for any reason. We strongly encourage families to use reusable containers to follow our philosophy of taking care of the earth.

Parents provide one labeled morning snack (served at 10 am). This snack is encouraged to be healthy. An afternoon snack is provided by the school

Children are never forced to eat anything they do not wish to eat. Teachers encourage participation in meals and snacks. The school does not serve breakfast, but for children arriving BEFORE 9:00 am, they are welcome to bring their breakfast from home to eat.

RESTING TIME

For all children staying for Extra, or all Day Care there will be a resting period from 1:00-2:30 PM. State licensing requires each preschool aged child to be on a cot (provided) during the specified time.

Each child will bring a clean crib sheet at the start of the week and take it home at the end of their school week to be laundered. Each child is allowed one blanket and/or lovey. In accordance with our philosophy and desire to foster independence and speech development, pacifiers are not permitted during the preschool day or resting time.

TUITION

Tuition is based upon the number of days a child is scheduled to attend, NOT actual attendance. We do not offer make-up days for appointments or vacations.

MATERIAL FEE

A non-refundable materials fee of \$100 per child is due at enrollment. Every year, there is a re-enrollment fee of \$75, due in May when new Admission Agreements are given out.

PAYMENT POLICY

Tuition is due in advance on the 1st of every month, made payable to **Happy Hearts Preschool**. There is a \$50 fee for tuition received after the 5th. If tuition has not been paid by the 10th of the month the school will automatically un-enroll your child, unless arrangements are made for payment.

* Returned checks are charged a fee of \$45, plus the late fee

TERMINATION OR REDUCED SCHEDULE

Both parties must provide 30-days written notice to cancel service and terminate enrollment. However, if the school cannot guarantee the health or safety of the staff or children, the school has the right to terminate enrollment or reduce schedule with written explanation.

WE LOVE TO BE OUTSIDE!

PLEASE BE SURE YOUR CHILD IS DRESSED FOR THE WEATHER!

DAILY SCHEDULE

Even if outside time is not indicated on our schedule, we attempt to be outside as much as possible for almost all activities.

8:30-9:30 Arrival & Free Play (Inside or Outside)

9:45 Circle Time

10:15-10:30 Snack Time (outside)

10:30-12:00 Outside Play & Activities

12:00 Lunch (outside)

12:30 Ladybug Morning Pick Up

1:00 Sprouts & Blossoms Pick Up Time

1:00-2:30 Quiet Resting Time

3:00 Afternoon Snack

3:30 Afternoon Pick Up Time