



WELCOME

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We would like to welcome you and your child to the Tot Spot Child Care Center. At Tot Spot, it is our goal to provide your child with a nurturing and loving environment, an atmosphere of acceptance, and a positive educational experience that is full of love, learning, and laughter.

This Parent Handbook has been prepared to help acquaint you with our policies and procedures. Please take the time to read it and keep it handy as a reference guide during the year. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

We are excited to be a part of the nurturing, growth, and development that each child will experience during this year, and we appreciate your sharing this part of your child's life with us. Your children are a blessing to us and we are thankful that we can contribute to their positive development and well-being.

Sincerely,

Tot Spot

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MISSION STATEMENT

At Tot Spot, our mission is to care for your child by providing a nurturing learning environment based on the simplest ingredient a person can provide: love. Tot Spot is dedicated to providing an atmosphere of acceptance for your child where he or she can mature socially, emotionally, physically, and academically through his or her first years.

STATEMENT OF SERVICES

Tot Spot provides exceptional care for children aged 6-weeks through pre-kindergarten. Tot Spot participates in the voluntary pre-kindergarten program (VPK); through which the state of Florida subsidizes 540 hours (3 hours per school day) for children within the year that he or she turns 4 years old on or before September 1st. As of the 2013-2014 school year, Tot Spot will be utilizing the Creative Curriculum®. The cornerstone of the Creative Curriculum® is its core philosophy that children learn by doing. The creative curriculum nurtures your child's creativity and creates a high quality learning atmosphere that fosters a child's confidence and problem solving abilities by focusing on 4 key areas: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Tot Spot is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm.

HOLIDAYS

The following holidays are observed by Tot Spot:

- New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

OTHER CLOSURES

All other closures will be announced as early as possible so that parents can make necessary plans with minimal inconvenience. These closures will generally be limited to large-scale maintenance efforts and teacher workdays. In the event that inclement weather forces us to close, it will only be based on Orange County Public Schools system closures.

ADMISSION

Admission to Tot Spot is limited to children between the ages of 6 weeks and 4 years old. Acceptance will never be limited by race, creed, color, or religion. Children will be placed in a class according to their birthday, and moved up as a class. We find that this approach helps to better prepare children for the school system, and also eases transition to a new class by giving them familiar faces in a new surrounding.

FEE SCHEDULE

(NON-TUITION)

Registration (yearly):.....	\$75.00
Late payment (per incident).....	\$20.00
Non-sufficient funds (per incident).....	\$25.00
Late pick-up (per minute).....	\$1.00
Withdrawal without notice.....	2 weeks tuition

All students pay a registration fee at the time of enrollment and every year thereafter at the beginning of the new school year.

Tuition is due Monday, prior to the week of care. Whether the student attends one day or all five days in a week, the weekly price is the same. A late fee will be assessed if payment is not made by close of business on Tuesday.

Tuition rates are addressed on the tuition agreement form that was signed upon enrollment. Tuition rates are subject to adjustment at the beginning of each year.

* These prices reflect the rates for the current school year, and may be adjusted at the beginning of the next school year. The school year for Tot Spot coincides with Orange County Public School system.

VACATION, ABSENCES, AND WITHDRAWAL

After 3 months of enrollment, the student is entitled to one vacation/sick week. This is an unpaid week where the student does not attend. If a child is enrolled during the summer period (July and August) he/she is also entitled to a vacation/sick week. The summer period vacation/sick week is separate and not dependent on whether or not the yearly vacation/sick week has been used. Please inform the staff in advance if your child will be using this week.

In the event of an absence, the parent will be responsible for full payment of that week's tuition. If a student has previously used, or does not yet qualify for the vacation/sick week and does not attend, the parent is still responsible for that week's tuition.

Withdrawal from Tot Spot may be made at any time with a written two-week notice. Upon receipt of the two-week notice, payment will be due in advance for both weeks. If no notice is given the parent will be responsible for paying for both weeks. Any unresolved accounts will be referred to a collection agency, and subject to legal action.

STUDENT PICK-UP POLICY

CHILDREN WILL ONLY BE RELEASED TO AUTHORIZED PERSONS AS LISTED ON THE ENROLLMENT FORMS.

All persons other than known parent/guardians will be identified through presentation of a government issued, picture ID. We request that you call ahead and notify us if anyone other than the parent/guardian is going to pick up the student.

Our goal is to ensure the safety of your child at all times, IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE PERSON PICKING UP YOUR CHILD, TOT SPOT WILL NOT RELEASE YOUR CHILD.

DRESS CODE

At Tot Spot, we want to ensure your child's safety. For this to happen, proper dress is imperative. We ask that your child come to school dressed appropriately for the weather. We also require that all children come to school in closed-toe, closed-heel shoes. Flip-flops, sandals, and "croc" style shoes are unacceptable and will not be allowed. In the event that your child's class has a themed dress day (pajama day, etc.), then theme based clothing and footwear are acceptable; however, we ask that you send appropriate footwear in addition to the outfit so that your child may go outside for play. In the event that your child comes to school in inappropriate clothes or footwear, we will attempt to accommodate, but ultimately if we cannot, the parent is responsible for returning with the appropriate items.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

At Tot Spot, in addition to a loving and nurturing environment, we want to provide your child with educational opportunities that will better prepare them for school and give them a competitive academic advantage when he or she gets there. At Tot Spot, our lead teachers have either their bachelor's degree in an early childhood education related field or their Child Development Associate national credential (CDA). Either course of study results in a teacher who is fully competent and capable to teach your student using the latest and most comprehensive methods. Our teachers' assistants also have to meet specific requirements. Each assistant is required to have his or her Florida staff credential. Both teachers and assistants are required to maintain their annual training hours to keep their respective credentials active and current.

For more information on what your teachers and assistants have done and continue to do to maintain their qualifications please visit: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/training>

CLASSROOM STRUCTURE

Within the infant and toddler classes there is one teacher. This is due to the fact that there is a half-wall that separates the classroom, allowing these two teachers to assist each other as needed.

For all other classes there is one lead teacher and one assistant teacher at any given time. We also maintain our classes below state mandated student/teacher ratios. This

practice allows us to ensure that if a teacher needs to leave the class for any reason, the remaining teacher is not overwhelmed.

Our classrooms are set up in a fashion that builds on the previous year's experience for the child. For example: in the three year old class you will find that the centers are much the same as in the two year old class, but will be a little more organized in their execution.

The uniformity that this creates allows easier transition from year to year, which allows our teachers to spend more time loving and teaching and less time showing the students where everything is.

CURRICULUM

At Tot Spot, we use Creative Curriculum®. Here's a short description from the Creative Curriculum® website:

At the heart of the teaching strategies approach to early childhood education is the creative curriculum®, the country's leading scientifically based, comprehensive curriculum for programs serving children from birth to age 5.

We believe that curriculum should be integrated with high-quality assessment, professional development, and family connection resources to create a well-rounded program that addresses the needs of early childhood education professionals, children, and their families.

The Creative Curriculum® helps you plan and implement a developmentally appropriate program that promotes children's social-emotional development and learning in the core areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. It combines the latest research and the freshest ideas into a forward-thinking approach to learning--one that honors creativity and respects the role that teachers play in making learning exciting and relevant for every child in their classrooms.

Our unique approach is designed to inspire teachers, to help them create a high-quality learning environment and, most of all, to support their important efforts as they open doors to successful learning.

With the Creative Curriculum®, every program can put together a complete system that promotes positive outcomes for all children, including English-language learners, children with disabilities, and advanced learners.

DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATIONS

On a quarterly basis (October, January, and May), your teacher will provide you with an evaluation that will explain what the class has been learning, where your child excelled, and where he or she may need some extra help.

If at any time you have questions or concerns about your child's development, we encourage you to speak with your teacher. We believe that the parent and teacher create a partnership that is exceptionally suited to early recognition of developmental shortfalls, and finding solutions that will work for your child.

Annually, your teacher will schedule a conference where a detailed evaluation of your child's progress throughout the year will be reviewed. This will occur toward the end of the year. This review will be sent to your child's next class so that this process can continue.

PARENT PROVIDED ITEMS

The following items must be brought on the first day and maintained throughout the school year.

INFANT CLASS (6 WEEKS – 12 MONTHS)

- Two changes of clothes that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Diapers and wipes.
- Baby food and prepared bottles, as appropriate, clearly labeled with the child's name.
- A small, lightweight, receiving blanket for nap time that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Current physical form and immunization record.

TODDLER CLASS (12 MONTHS – 2 YEARS)

- Two changes of clothes that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Diapers and wipes.
- Age-appropriate lunch and sippy cup, clearly labeled with the child's name.
- A small, lightweight, receiving blanket for naptime that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Current physical form and immunization record.

TWO YEAR-OLD CLASS (2 YEARS – 3 YEARS)

- Two changes of clothes that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Diapers and wipes.
- Four pairs of training pants/pull-ups (as appropriate once the child is potty training.)
- Rubber pants (if you use them.)
- A small, lightweight, receiving blanket for nap time that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Current physical form and immunization record.

THREE YEARS OLD THROUGH GRADUATION

- Two changes of clothes that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Four pairs of training pants/pull-ups (if the child is still using them.)
- A small, lightweight, receiving blanket for nap time that can be left in the child's cubby.
- Current physical form and immunization record.

* It is highly recommended that you bring sunscreen and bug repellent for your child. Toys from home are not allowed at Tot Spot, the children argue over them and they tend to become a distraction.

MEALS AND SNACKS

All meals will be provided by the parent/guardian, while Tot Spot will provide snacks. At Tot Spot, we will strive to provide quality snack foods that are healthy and nutritious. On special occasions we will gladly serve special items such as cupcakes, cakes, and the like that are provided by parents. However, these will not be served until after the students have awoken from their naps. We also ask that any snack that is provided for the class as a whole, not include any form of peanut or peanut butter. Meals and snacks will be served according to the following schedule.

BREAKFAST:

- Provided by the parent (if desired.)
- Served from 6:30 am – 8:00 am.

MORNING SNACK:

- Provided by Tot Spot.

- Served at 9:45 am.

LUNCH:

- Provided by the parent.
- Not required for VPK-only students and students who only attend in the morning.
- Served at 11:30 am.

AFTERNOON SNACK:

- Provided by Tot Spot.
- Served at 2:30 pm (immediately following nap time.)

INFANTS:

- All formula and baby food will be provided by the parent.
- Infants are fed every three hours, and in between as needed.

**** ALL FOOD THAT IS PROVIDED BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST BE READY-TO-EAT. TOT SPOT WILL NOT HEAT MEALS DUE TO LIABILITY AND TIME CONSTRAINTS.**

TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. Thirty months of age is a good rule of thumb to start checking for signs of readiness.

Until your child is totally successful in his/her toileting, he/she should wear clothes that promote their independence. In addition, your child must have two complete changes of clothes (don't forget the socks!) The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try to avoid really tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers and belts, overalls, and onesies. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry".

We ask that you begin toilet training at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care. Your child's readiness is something we can discuss because consistency between our center and home will be very important. This is a special time for your child, a sign that he/she is growing up. Toilet training should be a good experience.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

At Tot Spot, we want all of our students to be healthy. To meet this goal we require that all students be up-to-date on all of their immunizations prior to enrollment.

To demonstrate that this requirement is met, you will need to provide your child's immunization record that can be obtained from your pediatrician.

For more information on the requirements, please visit:

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/immune/children/schedules/school-requirements.html

MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION POLICY

Medication will only be administered with prior arrangement via the “authorization for medication” form. Medication will only be administered to the child whose name appears on the prescription label and only in the dosages that are prescribed on the label. No medications that have expired will be administered. Tot Spot will not administer “over-the-counter” medications.

FIRST AID / EMERGENCY MEDICAL ATTENTION

At Tot Spot we strive to keep your child safe and healthy. As hard as we try to prevent them, sometimes accidents do happen. In the event that your child has an accident, we will quickly determine the level of care required and take action. At Tot Spot our staff will only administer first aid or resuscitative care. Any resuscitative care will be in conjunction with an immediate call for emergency medical services. First aid and emergency medical attention considerations are listed below.

FIRST AID:

Basic first aid will be rendered for minor injuries, such as:

- Minor scrapes and rug burn.

- Minor cuts such as paper cuts with little or no blood.
- Minor bumps and bruises.
- Minor burns.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL ATTENTION:

Emergency medical attention will be called for in order to save life, limb, eyesight, and hearing. This means that in any event where Tot Spot staff is not completely confident that basic first aid will be sufficient to keep your child safe, we will call for emergency medical assistance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Major cuts with uncontrollable bleeding.
- Burns worse than 1st degree (blistering, excruciating pain.)
- Broken bones.
- Concussion or indentation of the cranium.
- Excessive fever
- Any other situation where the staff at Tot Spot feels it may be necessary.

Situations that require first aid will be notified through the use of an accident report, while emergency medical attention will result in immediate notification by phone call to the parent/guardian along with an accident report. If the parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the student's alternate emergency contact will be called.

SICK CHILD POLICY

Diarrhea: a child with diarrhea must stay (or go) home until the diarrhea has stopped and normal bowel movements have resumed.

Fever: when a child has a fever above 100 degrees orally or above 101 degrees rectally, he / she must stay home until the child has been fever-free for 24 hours. If a fever develops during the day, we will call you and you must pick up your child as soon as possible.

Head lice: a child with head lice must stay home until specific treatment is completed and lice and nits in hair and clothing are absent.

Impetigo and conjunctivitis: these are very contagious conditions and must be treated with antibiotics before the child may attend. If your child has red, runny eyes or scabby sores, I will notify you. Your child must be taken out of daycare until he / she has been seen by a doctor and been on medication for at least 24 hours.

Runny nose: generally, a clear discharge is okay, and a thick yellow-greenish discharge is a sign of a more serious infection. This is more dangerous for younger, rather than older children, and we will use our discretion about asking you to keep your child at home.

Strep throat: a child with strep throat must not attend daycare until he / she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours and is symptom-free and feeling well.

Vomiting: a vomiting child must go home if he / she becomes ill while at daycare. He /she cannot return to daycare until vomiting has stopped for at least 24 hours.

BEFORE RETURNING TO CARE: IF YOU TAKE YOUR CHILD TO A DOCTOR BECAUSE OF AN ILLNESS, YOU NEED A NOTE FROM THE DOCTOR EXPLAINING THE ILLNESS, TREATMENT, AND WHEN YOUR CHILD CAN RETURN TO DAYCARE. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW THESE POLICY RULES. THEY REFLECT A COMMON RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THE CHILDREN FROM ILLNESSES.

PARENT AND TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

At Tot Spot, we consider the parent/ teacher relationship to be that of a mutual partnership, in which the benefit is most seen in the progress of the child. A good partnership provides the most benefit for your child, and that is what we strive for.

VERBAL:

Verbal communication between parents and teachers is essential in a partnership designed to help your child develop and learn. On a daily basis your child's teacher will discuss with you your child's activities, behavior, and any needs or concerns that there are. In return, we greatly appreciate your input on the same matters. This allows us to tailor our teaching practices to your child's unique needs.

WRITTEN:

Written communication from your child's teacher will come in the form of reminders that your child needs supplies like extra clothes, wipes, diapers, etc.; as well as accident/incident reports, event calendars and class newsletters.

VISITING, OBSERVING, VOLUNTEERING, AND DONATIONS

At Tot Spot we have an open door policy. We have recently installed a camera system that allows parents to observe their child from the front office without interrupting the flow of the class. This also lets a parent “pop” in, take a peak and return to work if they desire to do so.

Parent volunteers are always welcome at student events. These could include field trips, class picnics, graduations, etc.

At Tot Spot, we strive to keep your child’s creative mind engaged with projects that challenge them and entertain them. Our teachers try their best to carry out these projects using items that have been re-purposed from around the house. This helps to keep costs low. Your child’s teacher may occasionally ask you to donate household items such as paper towel rolls, old clothes, etc.

We also gratefully accept donations of items that may be used school wide. These include items like tissues, paper towels, anti-bacterial hand soap, hand sanitizer, sunscreen, bug repellent, etc.

FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION

Due to liability, Tot Spot does not provide transportation for field trips. Transportation to and from field trips as well as all other functions is the responsibility of the parent. If this is not possible, Tot Spot will try to accommodate by attempting to set up a car pool between your child and the parent of another child. At no point will Tot Spot accept any liability in the arrangement. The arrangement details will remain solely the responsibility of the two parents involved.

STATE OF FLORIDA MANDATED REPORTER POLICY

At Tot Spot our teachers follow the state of Florida’s mandated reporter policy. In the event that one of our teachers suspects abuse or neglect, they are required by law to report the circumstances to the state, who will then investigate. Reporting can be carried out by any of our staff at any point when a potentially hazardous situation is suspected.

For more information on the state of Florida’s mandated reporter policy, please visit: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/abuse/publications/mandatedreporters.pdf>

DISCIPLINE POLICY

At Tot Spot, we encourage positive redirection. Positive discipline teaches children where limits are set, how to maintain control of their bodies, and how to problem solve in the event of the conflict.

We encourage children to empathize with one another's feelings and see the results of their actions. We discourage inappropriate behavior. We use "time out" as our last resort. Any child that is put in time out is always supervised by a teacher and will remain in time out for 1 minute per year of age of the child. When time out is over, it is explained to the child why time out occurred and what correct behavior is expected. No child is subjected to verbal derision, corporal punishment or physical discipline at any time. Discipline shall never be related to food, rest, or toileting.

We will make every effort to work with parents of children having behavioral difficulties in child care. Behavior of children that disrupts normal classroom group activities on a frequent or extended basis may indicate physical or emotional problems requiring the attention of a professional specialist. The teacher and/or director, with parental consent, will take the necessary steps to refer the child to the appropriate place for a professional evaluation.

Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior that is upsetting to the physical or emotional well being of other children may require the following actions:

- Parents of the child will be called in for a conference. We will discuss the issues and identify some possible solutions. A plan of action will be developed and agreed upon by the parents, teacher, and director.
- If the plan of action is not working, the parents will be called in for another meeting. We will discuss what is not working and develop another action plan.
- If no progress has been made towards solving the problematic behavior, the child may be suspended from care. This suspension may range in length from the rest of the day to indefinitely.
- If a child is removed from class for problematic behavior and the parent is called to pick up the child, it is required that the child be picked up immediately.

STUDENT TERMINATION POLICY

Tot Spot reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of fees.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the handbook and/or parental agreement.

DESTRUCTIVE WEATHER PLAN

In the event of destructive weather, Tot Spot will abide by the following guidelines:

HIGH WINDS:

in the event of high wind conditions, Tot Spot lead teachers will ensure that all students are inside and away from windows while maintaining a calm classroom demeanor. Assistant teachers will attempt to secure any outdoor objects that may become dangerous projectiles.

TORNADO WATCH:

In the event of a tornado watch (conditions are favorable), Tot Spot lead teachers will ensure that all students are inside and away from windows while maintaining a calm classroom demeanor. Assistant teachers will attempt to secure any outdoor objects that may become dangerous projectiles.

TORNADO WARNING:

In the event of a tornado warning (a tornado has formed or is imminent), all Tot Spot staff and students will immediately be moved into the interior of the building, away from windows and glass doors. A closure will be determined based on the actions of the orange county public school system, and parents will be notified immediately upon this determination.

LIGHTNING:

In the event of lightning strikes in the central Florida area, all staff and students will be moved inside immediately.

THUNDERSTORMS:

In the event of thunderstorms in the central Florida area, all staff and students will be moved inside immediately.

HURRICANE WATCH:

In the event of a hurricane watch (hurricane conditions are possible within 36 hours), Tot Spot staff will closely monitor the weather conditions and ensure that all outdoor objects are secured. Depending on the weather at the time, children and staff may still be able to have outdoor activities. In the event that the weather worsens, staff and children will immediately be moved inside and further action will mirror the decisions of orange county public school system.

HURRICANE WARNING:

In the event of a hurricane warning (hurricane conditions are likely within 24 hours), Tot Spot will mirror the decisions of Orange County Public Schools system and notify parents as quickly as possible.

FIRE EVACUATION PLAN

In the event that there is a fire at Tot Spot, all staff and students will immediately evacuate. Teachers and staff will lead the students to the Citgo parking lot, where both teachers and administrative staff will verify attendance. Once emergency personnel have arrived, any directions given by them will be followed. Parents will be notified as quickly as possible of the situation and what further action will be taken.

POWER FAILURE

In the event of a power failure, students will be led outside (weather permitting), where they will be able to enjoy outdoor playtime until power is restored. If power is unable to be restored within one hour, parents will be notified of the outage and asked to pick up their children.

INTOXICATED PARENT PROCEDURES

Tot Spot will not allow a parent/guardian who is intoxicated to transport in a motor vehicle any child who is in the care of Tot Spot. If a parent/guardian arrives at Tot Spot intoxicated, the staff will work hard to provide alternate means of transportation. Should the intoxicated parent/guardian still insist on transporting a child in our care in a motor vehicle, Tot Spot will immediately notify local police, providing the name of the parent/guardian, license plate number, vehicle description, and home address. The parent/guardian will be called in for a conference, in which he/she will be notified of their termination.

If an authorized person for pick up (not a parent/guardian) arrives at Tot Spot intoxicated, Tot Spot will not, under any circumstance release the child.

If dealing with an intoxicated individual becomes a combative situation, local police will be called immediately.

LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

Lockdown is implemented when the threat of violence or gunfire is identified. During lockdown, students and staff are to remain in designated lockdown locations at all times. Do not evacuate until each room is cleared by law enforcement or an all clear signal is given by administration. This response is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, the following types of emergencies:

- Gunfire
- Threat of extreme violence outside the classroom
- Imminent danger in the surrounding community

Lockdown requires closing and locking doors immediately after which no one is allowed to enter or exit.

Upon the conclusion of lockdown procedures, parents/guardians will be notified.

LOST/ABDUCTED CHILD PROCEDURES

To prevent lost or missing children, staff will count children frequently. A staff member will be responsible for performing a “sweep” of the area that the children are leaving to make sure that no child is overlooked.

If it is determined that a child is missing, lost, or abducted, the staff will notify the police or sheriff, and parents/guardians. If on a field trip, the staff will notify the facility management to assist in their search for the child.