

Tam Newsletter: August and September 2021

It was nice to see everyone at our meet and greet event this past week. Here is the link to our **Back to School Zoom** https://youtu.be/14D-D3m_pZ0. Preschool is the first classroom experience for most families. We know there are a lot of new things to learn for both children and parents. We are here to help and support each other along the way. If you have any questions about school procedures, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Class Curriculum:

At the beginning of the school year, our goal is to allow the children to become acclimated to the classroom setting. Soon, the children will know what to expect in their schedule and how to transition from one activity to the next as a group.

We will be doing activities to get to know everyone in class. **We need one photo of your child without a mask, and a second photo with the family. You can bring the photos to your child's class or email them to Marcela.** The photos will only be used for activities in the classroom with the kids and teachers. We would like to have all the photos by the end of the week. A simple family selfie and snapshot of your child without mask will do. Thank you!

School Items Needed:

Only essential items will be allowed with your children into school (no toys).

Children need to bring: (All items need to be labeled)

- 1 face mask on, and 2-3 extra with your child's name (masks with ear straps work best)
- Extra clothes in a Ziploc bag to stay at school
- Diapers/pull-ups to have at school if needed
- A lunch box with easy to open containers (no microwave available for heating)
- A water bottle with water
- A sweatshirt and comfortable shoes (No flip flops or Crocs)
- Clothes should be comfortable to play with, easy to take on and off in the bathroom independently, and expect they will get dirty or worn out at school.

Parent Communication and Information:

Pick-up and Drop-off times can be a difficult time to communicate with teachers because they need to make sure children enter and exit the classroom safely. Here are some ways to communicate with teachers in the classroom:

Each class has their own email and phone to communicate with families:

Creek Room: creek@tamalpaispreschool.org

Class phone number: 415-388-9286

Teacher: Abby, Sheila, Myreya, Marcela, and Dana

Garden Room: garden@tamalpaispreschool.org

Class phone number: 415-388-4286

Teacher: Michelle M (Mimi), Michelle S (Mishi), and Gina

Pre-K Room: prek@tamalpaispreschool.org

Class phone number: 415-388-4286

Teacher: Lindsey, Cece, Anne, and Dana

Director and Aftercare: director@tamalpaispreschool.org

*If you have general questions or concerns contact Marcela. I'm always happy to meet with parents, answer any questions, or address any concerns. Calls or emails will be returned within 24 hours. I work in the classroom in the mornings most days, so I tend to check emails in the afternoon. **For pick-up emergencies call the classroom number to reach your child's teacher.**

*Email two weekdays in advance to make or cancel aftercare reservations, or for any general questions for the afternoon staff. *Please do not email the classroom teachers for afternoon reservations.*

Office phone number: 415-388-4286

Call for last minute pick-up arrangements at 2:00 or 4:00 pm or if you are running late.

Aftercare Teachers: Abby, Gina, Meigan, Dana, and Marcela

Classroom teachers will email information about group activities and send fun pictures of your child's life at school. Reply back to the email if you have questions about the information or need to reach out to the teachers.

Make sure that people who pick up your child on a regular basis are listed in your child's pick-up list, and know how to use the digital sign-in system. They also need to know safety rules and procedures. **People on your pick-up list should know that they may be called to pick up your child if there is an emergency and we cannot reach you.**

Teachers send notes home with information like minor scrapes or bumps (we will call for anything significant). We also include milestone notes, reminders, and updated about your child's day.

Billing: For billing questions, **please contact Rose Lofrano**, our Chief Operating Officer. Her contact information is 415- 246-4941 and rosesp1@yahoo.com.

The next invoices through Curacubby will be coming via email on September 5th. It will include your tuition bill and our annual Supply and Enrichment fee. As a reminder, tuition is divided into 10 installments: the first was your deposit previously paid, the remaining 9 payments will be due Sept 2021 through May 2022. Payments are sent out the 5th of the month and are due on the 25th, a late fee will apply after that. Please let Rose know if you have any questions or difficulties.

Dropping off your child at school:

School starts at 9:00 am (Morning Care is available at 8:00 am)

Classroom activities start around 9:15 am, so please make sure to be on time for drop-off.

***The Creek Room** entrance is marked as Room #3, located in the church office courtyard, near the front area of the church complex.

***The Garden Room** entrance is located behind Fellowship Hall, near the new wooden outdoor worship stage.

***The Ocean Room Pre-K** entrance is located under the car awning facing the creek, in the back of the church complex.

Families can only park in preschool and pre-k assigned spots. [We are NEVER allowed to park in church assigned parking spots \(located across from the sanctuary and the church office\), or the red zones in front of the church.](#) If you are doing a quick drop off and pick up, you can park in the unmarked spots if one is free, but you cannot linger on an unmarked spot.

When dropping off your child, walk to his/her classroom door to be greeted by the teachers. Parents or caregivers must stay outside the classroom due to Covid-19 restrictions. **Please make sure everyone who is dropping off or picking up your child has been added and knows how to use our digital sign-in system.** I'm attaching instructions on how to use the system in Curacubby. [A cell phone, a cell phone number, and a pre-activated 4-digit code is required to use the system \(an iPad will be available at school to help with the process if needed\).](#)

We know how hard it is for parents to say goodbye during the first days of school, as it is a significant time in your young child's lives, and emotional for all. Teachers will help comfort the children and will reach out to parents if extra help is needed. The sooner you say goodbye to your child, the sooner he/she can calm down and transition into school. **If you linger and hesitate, your child will sense it and be nervous. Stay calm and strong. Quick drop offs tend to work best.** The teachers will be there to comfort your child and create bonds that will help with transition.

Tears are normal, especially at the beginning of the year. Teachers will give you a call if your child is not engaging at school, and will create an individual plan to transition if needed. We like to try a simple goodbye on the first day of school because children often surprise us and rise to the occasion.

Please do not linger around the school area after dropping off or picking up your child. We need to make space for everyone to social distance as they pick up. Large gatherings are still not allowed in school grounds. Our student population is not vaccinated and we need to keep everyone safe.

Pick-up Time:

The regular school day ends at 1:00 p.m. The doors will open and children will be ready for pick up from 12:50 to 1:10 p.m. Children not picked up after 1:10 p.m. will be transferred to Afternoon program. Parents will be contacted for pick up, if your child does not have an afternoon reservation. Children get nervous if they get picked up late, so please let the classroom teachers know if you think you may run late, so we can comfort your child.

A teacher will greet parents at the door and will call children to the entrance for pick up. If someone else is picking-up your child, you need to inform the school ahead of time. Email ahead of time (a days in advance), or call the classroom teachers. Students can only be released to those individuals designated by parents/guardians. People picking-up will need to show ID if a teacher does not recognize him/her. The school will only release students to people who are over 18 years old, unless parents write a consent letter ahead of time.

***Pick-up at 2:00 or 4:00 pm will happen in the Pre-K entrance, facing the creek.** The doors will open and children will be ready for pick five minutes before pick up time and five minutes after.

Morning Care:

Morning Care reservations are not required. You can drop off your child in their classroom an hour early, starting at 8:00 am. Anyone entering the classroom before 9:00 am is automatically added to Morning Care.

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. (\$12.00) One-hour block only

Aftercare:

Afternoon reservations are required and **our afternoon program is now full** with permanent reservations. From time to time, we may have drop-in spot open, as cancelations may occur. Please contact us two weekdays in advance to check on availability.

Aftercare is held in the Pre-K class and playground area. Teachers will take all kids scheduled to attend aftercare to the Pre-K Class. Parents will pick up their child at the designated time from the Pre-K front door, facing the creek. Families can cancel reservations two days in advance to avoid charges.

1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. (\$12.00) One-hour block

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (\$24.00) Two-hour blocks

Fall Conferences:

Conferences are an opportunity to talk individually about your child with his/her classroom teachers. Conferences last about 20 minutes and will be done via Zoom. The Fall conference focuses on providing us with insight about your child to help us set individual goals for the year. Each class will be scheduling conferences soon. More information to come.

Toilet Training: We are happy to partner with families to fully accomplish toilet training if needed. **Please check in with teachers regarding toilet training goals for your child, or if your**

child is wearing diapers. Please bring diapers to school and we will provide the wipes.

Teachers will monitor the bathrooms, help pull up garments, or wipe if needed. Please avoid putting on complicated clothing on your child, sweatpants or clothing with elastic waistbands work best at school.

Health Reminder:

*We ask that you keep your child home if he or she is not feeling well or you suspect COVID-19 exposure. If your child looks to be under the weather when he or she wakes up, please give your child a day at home to rest and make sure he/she is well, as symptoms can worsen as the day goes on. If children come to school sick, not only will they spread germs, but your child will not enjoy their day at school feeling sick and recover may take longer without proper rest.

*Tam will send health notices of reported illnesses present in the class. Due to COVID-19, we have to be extra careful when it comes to illnesses. We need to keep track of any symptom and contact the Health Department if needed, therefore expect more communication and follow up with any illness your child may have.

*If your child suffers from allergies, and is showing allergy symptoms, he/she will need to have a doctor note stating he/she safe to be at school in order to be allowed in the classroom. **We need to make sure the symptoms are not due to Covid-19.** Even with allergies, children may not be at school if having a temperature of 100.4 or higher, as well as with severely runny nose or cough. When allergies are acting up, and are not under control, children are just not well enough to participate at school comfortably.

*Teachers will monitor children's health throughout the day. Teachers will do a second temperature check mid-morning. If a child starts to show symptoms a teacher will isolate with the child away from the rest of the group and contact the family for pick up. Parents must be able to be at the school right away or have someone on their emergency list who can come pick up a sick child within a short time frame. We will clean and sanitize the areas where the child has been playing. Children who are sent home with a suspected symptom must check with the director to make sure they are all clear to be at school.

***We now follow a 48-hour health policy. If your child is home sick, or was sent home due to illness, your child needs to be symptom-free and/or on antibiotics for at least 48 hours before he or she is able to return to school. This guideline helps ensure everyone is healthy at school and exposure is kept at a minimum. Expect more restrictions if there is exposure to COVID-19, as we will follow the Health Department guidelines. Thank you for helping to keep our school community healthy and helping us remain open.**

Safety Procedures:

*Our State Licensing guidelines require teachers, students, and parents or caregivers to wear masks at school. **Children must wear a mask to school and pack at least 3 extra masks in their lunch box or backpacks.** Masks allow us to social play safely and stay in contact with each other in the classroom. Children need to have their name on their mask, as well as all personal items.

Please help us by talking with children about the importance of wearing a mask and how to do so safely. Teachers will keep an eye on children and will help adjust masks when needed. If a child is absolutely refusing to wear a mask, we will give him/her time to play outside for a few minutes and try wearing it again. Masks are essential for keeping everyone safe, so please help us keep everyone safe by using them. Children have done a great job at keeping their masks on in the past, and we have seen that it is also deterring them from putting items in their mouth. Masks with ear straps work better than scarf or tube masks, as they don't need to be adjustments constantly.

Masks with exhalation valves or vents are not allowed at school. They are intended for use in construction work, however, this design doesn't prevent the spread of infectious diseases. The vents allowing users to breathe in filtered air and exhale warm, moist air through the valve. These valves reduce heat and moisture inside masks, making them more comfortable to wear for long periods. The main reason for wearing masks is to prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air when a person coughs, sneezes or talks, the CDC says. **When a mask has a valve, respiratory droplets from the wearer are expelled into the air and could reach other people.**

*Children and teachers must pass a wellness check every morning before entering the classroom. Everyone will need their temperature taken (temperature must be under 100.4), we will check for signs of illness (cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, rash, etc.), and they must not have been exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days. The daily wellness check for children will be integrated in the digital sign-in system.

*Everyone must wash their hands when entering the classroom, before and after eating, after touching his/her face, after bathroom use, and at the end of the day. Children will be reminded to not touch their eyes, nose, mouth, and to sneeze into their elbow or tissue. They will be taught how to wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. We recommend singing "The ABC", "Happy Birthday", or our own hand washing song while they wash hands to keep time.

*Only children and teachers assigned to each class will be allowed to enter the classroom. Due to safety restrictions, no parents or visitors will be allowed inside the school, unless it is an emergency. Adults must wear masks and appropriate PPE when entering the classrooms.

*Snack will be provided for children unless a special arrangement is made due to allergies. The snack teacher will sanitize the snack area before and after use. The snack teacher will serve snack and water to each individual child in a clean container.

*We have full classes, but the children will rotate in groups of 10 or 12, to allow for social distancing. Windows will remain open when possible and outside play will be utilized often. Social distancing with play area spacing, individual play trays, and visual markers will be used with children during activities. Teachers will hold and comfort teaching when needed. We are still a preschool and want to provide our students the love and care they need.

*In the winter, when it gets cold outside, we will keep doors and windows open, and will be outside as much as possible, even with light rain or thick mist. We will have the heat on inside the classroom and the air purifiers, but expect that it will be cold. **Please make sure children dress appropriately for the winter weather and have layers available.**

COVID-19 Information:

Should there be a documented case or known exposure to COVID-19 on-site, all affected parents/teachers will be notified of the exposure. We will follow all CDC/Marin County Health Department procedures regarding cohort notifications and quarantine. The facilities will be sanitized prior to re-entry.

If a child or teacher becomes ill at school, they will immediately be moved from the group. The child and a teacher will wait comfortably in an area away from the rest of the group. Parents must be able to be at the school within 20 minutes or have someone on their emergency list who can come pick up a sick child within that time frame. There will be a cleaning/sanitizing of the areas where the child has been playing as soon as possible, and we will wait for test results or health information from a doctor to follow health protocols.

School Closures:

Our goal is to keep everyone safe at school and to remain open to support our school community. We really appreciate you trusting us with your child and family's health. We take that responsibility very seriously. We will close our school when the children and teacher's safety is at risk.

***We have to close on dangerously high smoky days (around 150 AQI), as it is a health risk for our children and teachers.** When COVID-19 risk goes up, everyone's health risk increases, and so does the likelihood of long school closures. The recommendation on heavy smoke days is to stay inside with doors and windows closed, but our COVID-19 risk goes up when we are inside with no ventilation. We normally have space to social distance, to be outside as much as possible, and allow for air flow. Many of the COVID-19 health protocols we have in place at school are opposite to smoky day protocols, so we have to take into consideration worse case scenarios and health risks.

Please watch for the AQI in AirNow.gov: <https://www.airnow.gov>. We plan to close when the AQI is around 150. Families will receive an email in the morning, before school starts, when the air is expected to be high. We wait until the morning to make the class because air quality can change in just a few hours and sometimes it is much better in the mornings. We are only closing when the air is unhealthy for everyone, but please note that 101 to 150 AQI is not healthy for sensitive groups, and that includes children and people with respiratory illnesses. Parents can choose to keep children home anytime they feel like it is best for their child, just let us know your child will not be at school. We have air purifiers for all our classrooms, which will be used daily to help with smoky days and germ exposure.

We appreciate your support. We know it is hard to keep your child home if you are working. We are trying to do our best to make sure school is open as long as possible and we try to avoid long required school closures with COVID-19 exposure risks. Sometimes closing for a couple of days is better than closing for two weeks or longer.

*There are classroom and/or school closure requirements with COVID-19 exposure. It is all done in a case by case basis and with the help and guidance of our local Health Department, as restrictions depending on how direct or indirect the exposure has been. For information, please contact me or Rose directly. Our goal is to keep everyone safe at school. **Everyone must let us know of any health risks to the class as soon as possible, as it will minimize spread.** Communication is key, so if you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask us:

Marcela: director@tamalpaispreschool.org

Rose: rosesp1@yahoo.com

School Exclusions and Safety:

It is important to keep our classes healthy and to minimize exposure for the group. We ask that everyone limit health exposure outside of school by staying home as much as possible and to limit group activities outside of the classroom.

*We rely on everyone to keep us all healthy. We have to work together and appreciate the decisions you make to keep us all safe. **Families who choose to travel, or need to travel for work, must do so safely and need to keep the school informed, as we have to keep track of potential risk to our families and teachers. Please keep in mind that if you travel outside of CA, even if vaccinated, healthy restrictions require you, and possibly your child, to test and/or quarantine.** The school, with help from the Health Department, will assess exclusions on a case by case basis, as policies update regularly depending on travel destinations. **Please contact me or Rose directly regarding any travel plans outside of California, or if you or someone in your family is exposed to COVID-19 for any reason.**

*Persons who have been identified as exposed to COVID-19 should be excluded from the facility and must quarantined at home, per the local health department, after their last exposure to the infectious case.

Play Dates during CVOVID-19:

At school, we follow many safety COVID-19 restrictions while children play and interact with each other and our teachers. Playdates organized by the group parent **must** follow school safety rules and we recommend these rules for all playdates. We all have to do our part to keep everyone safe and we appreciate all you do at home as well as at school. **We all have to work together to keep our unvaccinated students safe.**

Here are some guidelines for small group activities during COVID-19, once it is safe to have playdates:

- **Masks must be worn at all times by children and parents.**

- Try to gather outdoors whenever possible (avoid high touch public places like playgrounds).
- Avoid sharing toys. Instead, have everyone bring their own (kite, bubbles, soccer ball, etc.).
- If anyone is not feeling well (any symptoms), please stay home.
- Only children within the same classroom should have playdates together, no siblings or children from other classes should have contact during play dates, to help limit exposure.

If you are unclear whether a specific activity would be appropriate or meet our restrictions, please don't hesitate to ask us. You can reach Marcela or Rose at the following email addresses:

Marcela: director@tamalpaispreschool.org

Rose: rosetsp1@yahoo.com

Dates Coming Up:

***First week of school starts August 23, 2021
All programs will open on 8/23**

***Labor Day (No School):** Monday, September 6

***Teacher Work Day (No School):** October 11

***Teacher Work Day (No School):** November 1

We are looking forward to a great year together!

Marcela Amador
Tamalpais Preschool Director
415-388-4286
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