Parent Handbook
2025-2026

the Giving tree

3800 E. 11 Mile Rd.
Warren, MI 48091
586 850-3729

Give Michigan's Kids a Great Start Readiness Program
Michigan's Nationally Recognized Pre-K Program

PreK for ALL

Mission Statement

The Giving Tree *Great Start Readiness Program* mission is to provide a safe, developmentally appropriate preschool experience for preschool aged children. Our goal is to provide a stimulating educational experience which promotes each child's language, social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development while enhancing their desire to learn

Philosophy

Because children learn from a variety of methods, The Giving Tree *GSRP* uses play, teacher-directed, child-directed, experimentation, and hands on activities to prepare a child for kindergarten and beyond. They use theirs senses in order to gain knowledge of the world around them. By using a variety of materials children get the experience and knowledge of cause and effect, problem solving, and abstract thinking. Our philosophy emphasizes responsibility, the sense of self and pro-social behavior. We believe that the partnership between school and home encourages the love of learning.

What is the *Great Start Readiness Program PreK for All?*

The Great Start Readiness Program is a preschool program funded by The State of Michigan for children who have reached the age of 4 by December 1, 2025. All children of this age are eligible to participate in GSRP. Eligibility factors determine priority of enrollment in the program. These factors include income and are determined by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential.

Days and Times

GSRP schedule Monday-Friday
8:30-3:30
Before and after school care may is available through
The Giving Tree Day Care.

Location

Inside the Liberty Foursquare Church
3800 E. 11 Mile Rd.
Warren, MI 48091
586 850-3729

Recruitment Plan

Enrollment begins in the spring. All students applying for free preschool will submit an application prior to being screened by a staff member. Additional forms will be mailed out and all materials must be returned before Aug. 30th. Documentation needed:

- Birth Certificate or other proof of age eligibility
- Health Form & Immunization Record
- Proof of Income (Tax return for previous year)
- Two current pay stubs of all in household who are working
- Child information Card
- Written Information Packet Documentation
- Household Income Eligibility Statement (Child and Adult Care Food Program form)
- Statement of Understanding
- Parent Notice of Program Measurement

A parent interview is conducted with the program coordinator or teacher to determine eligibility for the program. We prioritize income from the lowest to the highest. All children are GSRP eligible. Those families

under the 100% Federal Poverty Level will be referred to Head Start or can fill out a Head Start Referral Form. Children will not be denied enrollment based on challenging behavior, developmental delays or identified disabilities (e.g., toileting needs, speech, motor function, aggressive behaviors, and cognitive delays.)

Fees and Costs

There is no cost for the families in a GSRP program.

Confidentiality

All information regarding personal, financial or other collected information will not be shared with any outside organization without parent approval.

Staff

Teachers with early childhood qualifications will provide the children with a high-quality learning environment. The staff has FBI criminal background checks through fingerprinting. Teachers are certified in CPR, First Aid, and have Blood Borne Pathogens training. They are required to have 24 hours of continuing education each year.

Curriculum

The Giving Tree *Great Start Readiness Program* uses the Creative Curriculum. This curriculum provides a room arrangement and daily routine that is structured to permit a variety of interactions between both adults and children. The curriculum provides for a balance between individual, small group, and large group activities. We have interest areas that include: blocks, art, dramatic play, library, discovery, sensory, and music. Content areas include literacy, math, social studies, science, the arts, and processing skills in order to provide growth in large and small motor skills, language development, social/emotional development, cognitive development. This content adheres to the Michigan Department of Education's Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Pre-kindergarten.

Rest Time Policy

Children will rest for 1 hour per day. Children rest on their individually labeled cots. Blankets and pillows are welcome. All bedding will be sent home each Friday for washing. Rest Time accommodates for the needs of individual children, and includes alternate activities for children who do not sleep.

Assessment & Developmental Screening

All children are assessed using The Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment. The staff will record the growth and development of the student using checklists, anecdotal notes, photos, and portfolio items. Lesson planning is done according to developmental needs. Children are also screened twice a year using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire in order to understand how a child is progressing through his or her developmental milestones. Assessments are shared with the parents at parent teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

Attendance

Children are expected to attend school daily, and arrive on time. Those that do attend regularly will benefit fully in developing cognitive, social and emotional skills. A child, whose attendance is poor for reasons other than illness, will be contacted to work out the problem. Poor attendance (including late arrivals and late pick-up) could result in being dropped from the program. If your child is going to be absent, please notify the school.

Health Care Policy

We want to keep all of our children healthy. Please be fair to your child, the other children, and staff by keeping your child home if they are sick.

Your child must remain at home if:

- A fever over 100 within the past 24 hours, without fever reducing medication.
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea-Two or more loose bowels in the past 24 hours. Child must remain at home until symptom free for 24 hours.
- Green/Yellow mucus from eyes, or nose.
- Any contagious disease such as pink-eye, strep throat, hand, foot and mouth, scarlet fever, chicken pox, flu. Child must remain at home until symptoms are gone.
- Lethargic or listless.
- If your child cannot participate in the ordinary daily routine including playing outside, he/she is too sick to be in school.
- Unexplainable rash-Please consult your doctor for a proper diagnosis and follow physician's instructions before returning to day care.
- Ear/head ache- Please keep your child home until pain free without medication.
- Sore throat/white spots in throat with or without fever- Remain at home until symptoms are gone.

Please do not give your child medicine and send to school. When the medicine wears off your child will be sent home and in the mean time will have contaminated other children.

Children will be sent home if any of these illnesses present themselves during your child's day.

We teach children to wash their hands upon arrival, after using the bathroom, after sneezing, coughing, blowing their nose and before eating. Please work on these things at home as well. Also teach them to sneeze and cough into their arm versus their hand.

With all this being said, it is impossible to keep germs out of school. Your child will get sick periodically. We will let you know if we are experiencing an outbreak of any illness. We also ask that you let us know when your child is ill or has a contagious disease.

Emergency Procedure

In case of a serious illness or injury, parents are notified immediately. The parent then makes the decision as to the immediate care. If parent cannot be reached, 911 will be called and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital along with all health, and emergency records.

Emergency Plans

The Giving Tree has emergency plans in place for fire, severe weather, dangerous situations, and intruders.

Withdrawal from the Program

Children may be excluded from the program for the following reasons:

1. Request of parent.
2. Lack of immunizations or health form.
3. Inability to meet guidelines set up by the program.
4. Entry onto a more appropriate learning environment based on student's needs.

Exclusion Policy

Children will not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or other non-health related needs.

Sign In and Out Procedure

You must bring your child into the building. It is required that you sign in when you enter and upon pick up, sign out. Children will not be released to anyone not included on the child's information card, under 18 years old, or unable to produce identification. Parents with a custody order must have the order on file at the school.

Child Abuse Reporting

Child protection law states that a teacher, school administrator or regulated child care provider who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect shall make immediately, by telephone or otherwise, an oral report of the suspected abuse to Child Protective Services.

Licensing Notification

Our school maintains a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports and all related corrective action plans. This notebook is available for your review.

Cleanliness

The following health care plan is used in our building and is recommended by the Department of Human Services Day Care Licensing. Using water between 60 and 120 degrees, moisten hands with water and apply soap.

- Rub hands together vigorously until lather appears and continue for at least 10 seconds.
- Rinse hands under running water until free of soap and dirt.
- Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper.

Handling bodily fluids:
The staff will use precautions when handling bodily fluids as instructed in the blood borne pathogen training.
Cleaning and sanitizing:
Surfaces and toys will be washed with soap and water, rinsed with clean water, sanitized with a water and chlorine bleach solution, and allowed to air dry.

Health and Safety Policies

The safety of your child is our first concern. And with that in mind, the following policies are in place.

- Athletic shoes are to be worn to school, no open-toed shoes or flip flops.
- Children will be sent home if arriving at school or becoming ill while in school. Your prompt pick-up is important.
- Children need to be dressed appropriately for outside play with mittens, hats, boots and winter coats on cold days.
- Clothing must promote independence and be easy for your child to operate in restroom use and to go outside. (No belts, please).
- Comfortable, washable clothing as art projects can get messy.

- A set of extra clothes including: shirt, pants, underwear, and socks is to be kept in school for any accidents. (Please label all items)

Medication Policy

In the event a child is required to take medication during the school day: Parents may come and administer the medication, or medication can be given by a designated person providing a medication form be filled out.

Parent Involvement

We encourage all or our parents and guardians to feel welcome in our program. We look forward to your participation in your child's education.

- Two home visits are scheduled (Fall and Spring), and are a required component of this program
- Parents must participate in two parent-teacher conferences during the school year.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help in the classroom.
- Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Parent Coalition: Each Intermediate School District is required to have GSRP parent/family representation on the regional Great Start Collaborative (GSC) Parent Coalition; working with other committed parents/families to support early childhood practices in the community. These GSRP parents/families, in turn, act as liaisons to local family participation groups, sharing ideas and activities in person, virtually or through emailed reports.
- School Readiness Advisory Committee (SRAC): Another opportunity involves participation in a school readiness advisory committee (SRAC) convened as a workgroup of the Great Start Collaborative that provides for the involvement of classroom teachers, parents or guardians of program participants, and community, volunteer, and social service agencies and organizations. The advisory committee annually reviews and makes recommendations regarding the GSRP components. The advisory committee also makes recommendations to the GSC regarding other community services designed to improve all children's school readiness.
- GSRP PreK for All Families will be invited to attend two Family Participation Group events per year hosted by the Giving Tree. These events may be conducted in-person, or as a virtual event, and will share important information on child development with families.

School Calendar

School will start Sept. 9, 2025 and will end on June 12, 2026. See the enclosed calendar for school closure dates.

School Closings

In the case of severe weather, The Giving Tree *GSRP* will call or text you to let you know we are closed. If you have any question, please call.
In the event of any other closing, you will be notified by phone, text, and/or email.

Meals

Good nutrition is vital to children's learning and physical development. Our policies have been designed to encourage the development of good eating habits. Meals and snacks follow the Federal Child and Adult Food Program in which we have been a member for over 10 years. CACFP is a federal program that requires that we follow specific guidelines.
Meal requirements for preschoolers are as follows:

- Breakfast includes milk, grain and a fruit. (Children over 2yrs. are required to have 1% or fat free milk.)
- Lunch includes a milk, meat or meal alternative, grain, 2 fruit or vegetable servings.
- Afternoon snack includes 2 of the following: milk, vegetable, fruit, grain, and/or meat.

Meals are on a 2-week rotation and a menu is posted in each room and on the bulletin board near the entrance. Meals for our preschoolers and toddlers are scheduled at specific times.

- Breakfast is served 8:30-9:00
- Lunch is served 11:30-12:30
- Snack 3:00-3:30
- If your child is not here at the scheduled meal time, please feed them at home.

If your child is allergic to any foods, please let us know in writing on the back of the Child Information card.

Referral Policy

Children who may need services that cannot be provided by The Giving Tree or the *Great Start Readiness Program* will be referred to Macomb County School District, Macomb Family Services, the child's school district, and local food banks, The Giving Tree and *GSRP* will assist in contacting the necessary organizations.

Discipline

The staff shall use positive means of child management, which encourages self-control, self-direction, self esteem, and cooperation.

We will use the following methods of discipline:

- Encourage children to do things for themselves throughout the day;
- Treat conflict situations with children matter-of-factly; Approach children calmly and stop any hurtful actions; Acknowledge children's feelings;
- Involve children in identifying the problem by gathering information from children and restating the problem;
- Ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together;
- Give follow-up support when children act on their decisions.

The staff shall not use any form of corporal punishment, which is defined as the infliction of pain by a staff member upon a child by any means including:

- Striking a child with your hand or any object
- Restricting a child's movement by forceful grabbing, pinching, shaking, etc.
- Seclusion of a child in an inappropriate setting, i.e. closet
- Verbal abuse or demeaning of self concept, including harsh criticism, yelling, threatening, or bullying

The Giving Tree will follow the policy of The State of Michigan Board of Education laws restricting the use of seclusion and restraint in schools. (MCL 380.1307)

Code of Conduct

At The Giving Tree Preschool and Child Care we strive to provide a safe, caring, respectful environment for our children, staff and families. All people are to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, family composition, or genetic information. It is unacceptable to discriminate against another person on the basis of any of these characteristics. We take our responsibility in relation to personal interactions very seriously. Parents, likewise, have responsibilities around their interactions with staff, other parents, and children. It is expected that parents will support the respectful philosophy by following The Giving Tree Code of Conduct.

The following, while not limiting, are examples of unacceptable behavior:

- Discriminatory behavior or comments

- Harassment: Behavior that degrades, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses someone through verbal exchange, written notes, email, social media, gestures or body language. (Name calling, offensive jokes, yelling, threats, etc.)
- Bullying: Physical, verbal, emotional, and through social media, or cyber bullying (hitting, pushing, mocking, spreading rumors, gossiping, etc.).
- Physical abuse against one's child, other children, staff or other family members.
- Verbal abuse against one's child, other children, staff or other family members (threats, profanity, name calling, etc.).
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the center, staff member, child or another family.
- Theft of personal or center property.
- The breach of confidentiality.
- The possession of a weapon on Giving Tree property.
- The use of alcohol, illegal drugs or being intoxicated on the property.
- Smoking on Giving Tree property.
- Inappropriate social conversations.
- Taking photos of children in the classroom must only be done with director approval
- Use of cell phones upon dropping off or picking up your child
- Physical punishment of your child on Giving Tree Property

The following guidelines are expected:

- Be courteous to other parents, staff and children.
- Please make your best effort to have your child at school on time. We strongly suggest having your child in class by 9:00 so as to not disturb the class and teachers.
- To call if your child is not coming to school.
- To supervise your child when you are on the property, including supervision in the parking lot and around parked cars.
- To respect the property with no littering or damage/destruction of property.
- To refrain from using cell phones upon drop off and pick up.
- To refrain from coming on the property intoxicated.
- To keep animals off the property.

In order to keep a peaceful environment, it is imperative that:

- Weapons are not allowed on the property.
- Drugs, alcohol and intoxicated people are not allowed on the property.
- Profanity is not used on the property.

Communication is the key to a successful parent-teacher relationship. If at any time you have a question or concern, please direct them to your child's teacher or to the director. Most problems are caused by misunderstanding or miscommunication and can be solved almost immediately.

If the Code of Conduct is violated, it may result in a written warning, a written and agreed to plan of action, an immediate withdrawal from the program, or police involvement.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Giving Tree *GSRP* does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, weight, height, marital status, veteran status, disability, or other protected classes in our program, services, activities or employment. Any inquiries or complaints should be made to:
Joy Smick
Program Director
586 850-3729
givingtreepreschool@comcast.net

Pest Management Program

Occasionally, The Giving Tree applies pesticide in and around the school property. These applications are typically done on Saturdays. Advance notice will be given when the application of a pesticide, other than bait or gel formulations will be used. In an emergency a pesticide may be applied. Parents will be notified by telephone prior to application. If you wish to be notified, please send a letter stating child's name and address and phone number along with your wish to be notified.

Cultural Competence Plan

The Giving Tree *GSRP* program is aware that culture includes every aspect of a child's development. We take full responsibility for creating a culturally diverse learning environment that welcomes families and promotes a cultural diverse learning environment. This includes implementing activities to encourage children to exhibit pride in their heritage while providing opportunities for children to relate to both their culture and the culture of their peers. We fully understand and appreciate the diversity of our families and intend to provide a support system for second-language learners.

Grievance Policy

Parents are encouraged to express their concerns or provide feedback regarding the program. If you have any question, comments, or concerns, about the program please contact:
Joy Smick (Program Director) 586 850-3729

School-Day Routine

8:30-9:00 Arrival/Breakfast/Greeting Time- Children enter the classroom at their own pace Children have choices about whether to eat, spend time with books or interact with teacher and one another. Once all the children have arrived the teacher shares the daily announcements.

9:00-9:15 Large Group Time/Music and Movement- Teacher and children participate in activities planned around children's interests, developmental levels, music and movement, cooperative play and projects, and events meaningful to children.

9:15-9:25 Planning Time- Children indicate their plans to the teacher in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Teachers use a range of strategies to support children's planning (e.g. props, area signs, tape recorders, singing, planning individually in pairs, in small groups).

9:25-10:25 Work Time- (Children's 1 hour of uninterrupted choice)-Children initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Work Time, teachers participate as a partner in child initiated play and encourage children's problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.

10:25-10:35 Cleanup Time- Children and teacher clean up together keeping the spirit of play and problem solving alive. Children make many choices during clean up. Teachers accept children's level of involvement and skill while supporting their learning.

10:35-10:45 Recall Time-Children choose work time experiences to reflect on, talk about and exhibit. Teachers provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow the children's lead and encourage children to share (e.g. individual props or group games etc.). Teacher is unhurried in their approach and may complete recall with 4 or 5 children each day.

10:45-11:00 Small Group Time- A teacher-initiated learning experience based on children's interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials and talk about what they are doing. Individual children explore and use the same set of materials in their own way.

11:00-11:30 Outside Time- Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment, much as they do during Work Time indoors. Teachers supervise children for safety and join in their outdoor play, supporting children's initiatives and problem solving.

11:30-11:35 Bathroom/Wash Hands/Prepare for Lunch- Children choose where they would like to sit.

11:35-12:15 Lunch- Family style meals support doing things for themselves. Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, how much to eat. Teacher eats and has meaningful conversation with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own space including disposal of leftovers, and pushing in their own chairs.

12:15-12:30 Bathroom/wash hands

12:30-1:30 Quiet/Rest Time- Resting is a time for sleeping or quiet, solitary on your cot play. Rest time should meet the needs of each child.

1:30-1:40 Wake/Bathroom- Children are gently awakened as teacher turns on the lights. Teacher and children work together to put away cots.

1:40-2:40 Plan/Work/Clean-up/Recall Time- Refer to AM descriptions.

2:40-3:00 Snack Time- Children set up and are encouraged to clean up their own space.

3:00-3:30 Outside Time/Dismissal- Refer to AM descriptions.