

# Timson Hill Preschool



## Parent Handbook

2018-19

*Timson Hill Preschool does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, ancestry, place of birth, ethnicity, or physical disability, including, but not exclusive of, the admission of students and the equal use of all facilities.*

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***Forms required for Registration & Parent Checklist:*** see pocket of Information Folder

*About Us . . .*

## **Our Mission**

Timson Hill Preschool aims to offer a nurturing environment where young children are respected as capable individuals. We seek to support children's natural curiosity, in keeping with the belief that curiosity leads children to make important discoveries that remain valuable throughout their lives. We partner with families to foster community and support each child's intellectual and social well-being and development.

## **School Philosophy and Background**

Timson Hill Preschool, also known as the Williamsville Children's Center, is located in the village of Williamsville in an historic old school house. Our facility is fully licensed by the state of Vermont, and currently accredited with the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

THP staff provides a warm, nurturing, secure environment. A developmental approach is used to design age-appropriate activities that nurture the child's sense of adventure, self-confidence, humor, and discovery, as well as allowing for opportunities to observe, investigate, and explore.

Multi-age groups of children learn to master social skills and develop self-esteem during process-oriented activities. The non-competitive, nonviolent and creative atmosphere fosters a child's respect of others, regardless of different religious and/or ethnic backgrounds. Within our goal of overall positive development, children increase their social, emotional, intellectual and physical skills at their own pace.

Our staff is a group of early childhood professionals who continuously collaborate to provide the children with a program of the highest quality. They view each child within the context of his/her individual family, and work with parents to support that family's choices and concerns in ways that best serve the child. The curriculum is developed through teacher observation of the children and is based on a solid understanding of child development. Each day is planned around the children's full range of needs: social, emotional, physical, and cognitive. Time is available for daily conversations about the child's day and any questions parents might have. More involved discussions about the child's development and how s/he participates in the group happen twice a year during parent/teacher conferences.

Timson Hill Preschool is a non-profit parent cooperative. The school strives to keep tuition costs as low as possible, and all THP families are therefore expected to agree to some fundraising, organizational, and contractual obligations which help keep our school viable. Children must be **at least three years old and toilet-trained** before attending school, unless pre-arrangements are made with the Director. Children turning three later in the school year may be accepted after their third birthday as openings occur, and a deposit to hold the spot may be requested in this case. All children will be accepted into our program on a trial basis. In addition to 3-5 year olds, some early elementary students may also be

accepted into our afternoon program for after school care (3:00pm until close), based on availability and at the discretion of the Director.

## Curriculum...

### Curriculum Overview

A developmental curriculum, including Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), is used for young children, one which recognizes children's "ages and stages". This emergent curriculum allows for individual development through play. The Timson Hill program embraces a nature based thematic approach. We address social skills through the use of conflict resolution and language, and pre-reading skills through stories, singing, movement, & drama, and mathematical skills using puzzles, building, and an array of manipulatives. We introduce new concepts to allow the children to expand their play and therefore their learning. We make changes by observing each child, learning where their interests are, and assessing what their needs are. We gently guide them into challenging areas, new situations, and encourage development of self-esteem along the way. We build community within our classroom by listening and respecting each other and our differences.

### Educational Staff

The Timson Hill classroom offers children varied and rich experiences. The morning and afternoon teachers bring their wealth of education and experience to the classroom and generously share their interests in art, dance, music, nature, math, problem solving, and literacy.

It is the policy and goal of THP to support teachers in their professional development. Staff and substitutes are required to further their education through conferences and workshops in order to develop their skills as teachers and caregivers, and to comply with the state of Vermont licensing regulations. At such times, or in the event of a teacher's absence due to sickness, we have a pool of substitute teachers upon whom we call.

The Timson Hill Preschool Workplace Policy Handbook is a state-of the art resource for the staff and outlines all program policies. All staff members who work directly with children are evaluated at least annually using classroom observation and parent information. A Family Survey is conducted annually in order to collect information from parents that can be used for program improvement.

### Orientation

Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Timson Hill Program. The following activities are available:

- **Visit** during an Open-House or other scheduled time
- **Read all Parent Information**
- **Communicate** with Timson Hill alumni.
- **Fall Potluck** a fun social event in the Fall to acquaint children & families with their teachers & classroom.
- **Orientation Meeting** – Parents of incoming students are invited to attend our Spring Potluck to meet current staff and families and to ask any questions they may still have as they prepare to transition into the program. This is also a great opportunity to make new friends and plan summer playdates!

## Schedule...

### Hours of Operation

Timson Hill offers a two, three, and five-day preschool program beginning in the Fall and ending in June. The standard day runs from 8:00-12:00 and 12:00-4:00. In addition, before (7:30 am) and after care (until 4:30pm) options can also be arranged upon request and availability.

### Drop-off and Pick-up

Preschool children must be signed in and out using the form provided in the Preschool's entry. Children must be picked up at their scheduled time. After a five minute grace period; families will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute for late pick-ups.

In the event that someone other than those authorized on the registration form will be picking up your child, the teacher must be notified in writing beforehand, either with a note or by including such information on the "Sign-in" form in the entry. If a staff member has reason to believe that the person who is picking up a child has engaged in any activity related to drugs, alcohol or substance abuse that would endanger the wellbeing (safety) of that child, the school will take appropriate action, which may include contacting DCF (Department of Children and Families). We will request that another adult from the child's pick up list be called to get the child.

### Sample Daily Morning Schedule

8:00	Welcome time, arrival
8:30	Work Cycle - Activities: various developmentally appropriate projects and activities are available every morning.
10:30	Morning circle: songs & stories, rhyming, etc.
10:50	Snack (parents take turns providing)
11:00	Special Art Projects and/or movement
11:15	Outdoor time
12:00	Pick-up time ( <b>please be punctual</b> )

### Sample Daily Afternoon Schedule

12:15	Lunch
1:00	Rest
2:00	Free play and project
3:00	Snack
3:30	Outside play
4:00	Pick-up time

*We recognize that all children have personal learning styles, so times may vary.*

(Before Care 7:30 - 8:00 AM and After Care 4:00 - 4:30 PM)

## Snow Days

In the event that school is canceled at Newbrook Elementary School, there will be no school for Timson Hill. Listen to WTSA-FM 96.7 for information. The Director of Timson Hill Preschool also will email parents to inform parents of school closings. This information will also be posted on the school's Facebook page and website.

## *Registration and Financial Information...*

### Registration and Tuition

Timson Hill Preschool offers rolling enrollment based upon availability. For children turning three after September 1, enrollments will be considered based on availability. To hold your child's spot for the 2018-19 school year, Timson Hill Preschool asks that all required paperwork and the \$75 application fee be received prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An annually determined and nonrefundable registration fee is due with the **registration form** in order to secure a slot for the registering preschool child to cover administrative costs (see Appendix A for current pricing info). Families with more than one child in Timson Hill will pay only one registration fee per school year.

Once your child has been accepted for enrollment, only limited changes approved by the Director may be made to your child's schedule. If enrollment allows, it may be possible to add days to your child's schedule. However, decreasing days of attendance adversely affects the budget of the school and is therefore only allowed if a replacement can be found to utilize your spot. All scheduling changes must be submitted in writing to the Director and Board in advance. You will be held financially responsible for your scheduled preschool times unless the Board decides otherwise.

### Forms Required for Registration

The following forms are required for Registration:

- 🍏 Registration form w/ payment
- 🍏 Immunization Record, **OR** Religious Exemption for Immunization Form, (a state of Vermont requirement)
- 🍏 Physical Exam Record
- 🍏 Completed School Contract
- 🍏 Emergency Card
- 🍏 Work Contract
- 🍏 Photograph Release, Address-Phone Release, and Walking Permission Release (1 form)
- 🍏 Driving Permission/Parent Driving Disclosure

**These forms can be found in the Parent Information Folder and must be returned by the first day of school in order for a child to be enrolled.**

## **Late Payments**

Tuition is due monthly on the first of each month. Tuition is considered late after the 10th of the month. A late fee will be assessed of \$25.00 on all accounts not current by the 10th. When tuition payments fall 30 days behind, a child may not return to school until all tuition is paid in full or until an alternative arrangement for payment is discussed with the Director and Treasurer.

## **Tuition Deductions and Refunds**

No deductions will be made for absences, unless the Board votes to do so in special cases such as extended illness. No refunds will be given if a tuition slot is not used.

## **Withdrawal**

Once your child is enrolled and attending Timson Hill, your contract is considered in effect for the school year. To withdraw your child from any of the programs directly affects the budget of the school. If your child withdraws early, a penalty of one months tuition plus a forfeiture of your July security deposit (May's final bill). If there is a reduction in hours, your penalty will correspond to the amount of hours lost. Emergency circumstances regarding policy changes on contractual agreements will be made according to the discretion of the Director and Timson Hill Preschool Board.

## *Parental Obligations...*

### **Family Work Contribution**

Timson Hill Preschool and Children's Center was created and has been sustained through the efforts of many community members. The Center has continued to provide a happy, safe, nurturing learning environment for many children in the area as a result of the dedication and contributions of its families. After decades of experience, the following work requirements have been established based on what is feasible to families and what it takes to run a high quality program.

Parental obligations include the following.

- 🍏 Serving in an organizational role of one of our three fundraisers/events: Fall Raffle, Rabbit Run or Spring Festival
  - *Advertising coordinator and board members can substitute participation for one of these roles.*
- 🍏 Participating in the fall work day (contact Director for alternate task if you are unable to attend)
- 🍏 Participation at Spring Rabbit Run (minimum one parent per family)
- 🍏 Providing snacks on a rotating basis (2 weeks per year)
- 🍏 Participation in our board is welcomed; see Director if interested
- 🍏 Providing art supplies in leu of parent work day requirement
- 🍏 Providing cleaning supplies in leu of parent work day requirement

## *Health Policies and Miscellaneous...*

### **Health Certificate and Information**

All health forms, including a copy of your child's latest medical exam, must be completed by a health practitioner and returned before the first day of school. Each child should be vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella; and physical examination; and have submitted an Emergency Contact Card with preferences for medical and dental attention indicated. It is our policy that forms are submitted before your child enters school. An exemption form is included for children who are not vaccinated for medical, religious or philosophical moral reasons.

### **Safeguarding Health**

If you are uncertain about whether or not your child is well enough to be in school, please consult the "Guide for Safeguarding Health" which is located in Appendix C. In general, children should be well enough to participate in all school activities, including outside play.

### **Medication Policy**

It is the policy of THP that ALL medications be given at home if possible. If medication must be administered at the center and is agreed upon by all parties, the parent or guardian must complete the *Medication Treatment Consent* form, and the following policy applies. All medication must be given by a lead teacher. It must be in an original labeled container with the licensed provider's prescription intact. Over the counter medicines required by the child must be accompanied by a signed note with the child's name, the name of the medication, and an explanation of the condition required by the child, the date and dosage. The teacher will always fill out a required medication chart including date, time and signature. Please note that sunscreen lotion, bug repellent, and first aid creams can only be applied if an authorization form has been signed.

### **Notification of Neglect or Abuse**

Timson Hill employees are mandated to report suspected child neglect or abuse in accordance with V.S.A. chapter 14. It is our policy that the teacher needs to notify those parents or guardians that such a report has been filed with the State. Our role is to support the family in providing resources that will help develop healthy family systems.

### **Emergency Procedure**

In the event of an emergency, depending on the severity of the injury or illness, a parent will be called first, then Rescue or the child's doctor, as indicated by the Emergency Contact Card. A staff member trained in First Aid will treat minor cuts and injuries. All staff is trained in both First Aid and CPR. A report informing you of the injury will be shared with you upon pick-up of your child. The action taken is determined by the staff as to which course of treatment is most prudent. Your child's safety is our primary concern and staff will aid on the side of caution.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills will occur once a month at the discretion of the Director. Children will practice the emergency exit procedures that are posted at the entrances. Our goals are to get them out safely and for them to learn that it is important to get out quickly. Children will be expected to go out without their jackets. If we are asked to leave and stay out of the building, you will be notified and asked to pick up your child.



## **Emergency Plan**

The Director will update the emergency information for each student each year or as needed, ensuring that all current children's emergency forms have been filled out, and that copies of all info needed is on the emergency clipboard. Also supplies for the emergency pouch will be checked on a regular basis. In the event of a catastrophe level emergency requiring the evacuation of the THP building and rounds, please note that the children will be evacuated to the Thosum Gephellin Institute (the Buddhist Center on Dover Road). Parents will be notified and children will be released to the people listed on their emergency contacts.

## **Lost Child Policy**

In the event that a child is determined to be missing from the program, all available staff will assist in attempting to locate them. If the child is not immediately located, both the authorities and the parents will be notified to ensure that the child be found in the least amount of time possible.

## **Discipline**

It is our belief that a respectful environment nurtures a feeling of safety and respect in children. If a child needs guidance, we quietly remind him or her of respectful choices. If self-control is not easily attained, we encourage children to take a bit of time to renew themselves. In order to engender self-control, the child manages the length of time for this "timeout."

All prolonged discipline issues will be discussed with the child's parents at the earliest possible convenience. When a child's behavior is deemed inappropriate or unsafe for the other children or staff, the Director will discuss with the family possible help for the child. There are many organizations in the area that are designed to help childcare centers, children and their families with prolonged or intense behavior issues. If the attempt to work with the child's family to improve the child's understanding of social situations is determined unsuccessful by the Director/Board, or the family is not interested in the help the school deems necessary, we reserve the right to ask the family to withdraw the child from the school. Under such circumstances, all advance tuition will be refunded.

## **Visitor Policy**

Parents are welcome to visit the preschool at any time. Other visitors should be approved by and arranged with the teacher beforehand. Parent and family member visits may include, but are not limited to, observing, eating lunch, volunteering to participate in an ongoing activity, or sharing a story, music or crafts.

## **Locked Door**

Timson Hill Preschool locks its doors to meet minimum security standards that are common among similar educational institutions. Please knock loudly so we can come and greet you.

## **Birthdays**

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please notify the staff in advance to allow for scheduling changes. Suggested celebrations might include a special snack or craft organized and prepared by the parent. All requests must be approved by the classroom teacher in advance. We request that birthday party invitations that don't include all of the children in the class to be sent from home.

## **Holidays / Celebrations**

We neither encourage nor discourage the observance of holidays or celebrations. Each family who takes part in holidays or celebrations has their own beliefs, ideas and experiences that determine how their family celebrates the event and the event's importance. We encourage families to come into the classroom. We welcome photographs, food, books or other materials that can help us learn about your holidays, celebrations and traditions. Our mission is to provide the children with a basic understanding of the various cultures and beliefs around them. Please note that we have an annual Halloween celebrations which includes costumes and visits to a select group of neighbors. If you have questions or concerns about this event, please see the class teacher or the Director.

## **Field Trip Policy**

### Local Field Trips

Field trips and nature walks are considered part of our educational program. We will be taking regular trips in our immediate area such as visits to our neighbors, the pond and woods behind the school. We will provide the same responsible supervision as is provided in the classroom. Your written permission is required at the time of enrollment.

### Non-local Field Trips

These trips are planned in advance. You will be notified and given details in writing. No child will go on a field trip without permission and a telephone number to contact you. Parents and volunteers are invited to help chaperone these trips. There may be a charge.

## *Communication...*

### **Conferences**

Teachers will be formally available two days per year for conferences. These conferences are a way to help teachers better guide the child's education; they also provide an opportunity to exchange information regarding the wellbeing of the preschooler. Teachers are also available at parents' request to discuss child-related issues.

### **Board Meetings**

The Board, made up of parents and community members, invites and encourages all parents to attend monthly meetings. At the beginning of each school year, the Board will establish meeting times and communicate this to families. Parents who are unable to make a given meeting can request to read the monthly minutes of the Board meetings.

### **Absences and Vacations**

Please call the school as soon as possible if your child will be absent for the day. Also, please notify the teachers of any planned vacations.

### **Mailboxes, Bulletin Boards, Newsletters**

Each family will be given a mailbox wherein one can often find messages from various members of the Board, notes from teachers, bits of artwork, etc. Bulletin boards are updated regularly, so please make it a habit to look for news and ideas. Daily schedules are posted in the classroom. A monthly newsletter will apprise the community of upcoming activities, changes in the program, and changes in the staff.

## **Parent Concerns**

If a parent has concerns or questions about the school program, we encourage them to speak directly to the appropriate parties. Concerns about a child within the context of the classroom should go to the teacher(s). If the issue is not resolved, the Director should be consulted.

Broader concerns about the educational program or the organization of the school should go to the Director. If the parent is not satisfied, the President of the Board should be consulted. If there are concerns with administrative aspects of the school, the administrator should be consulted. If the parent is not satisfied, the President of the Board should be notified.

Concerns that have not been adequately addressed after following the procedure outlined above can be directed to the Child Care Consumer Concern Line at 1-800-540-794

## **Teacher Concerns**

If a teacher becomes concerned about a child's behavior, the parent will be consulted and a plan and a timeframe devised to assist the child in engaging in behavior appropriate to the program. If it seems as though the Timson Hill program is not suited to the child's needs, the family will be asked to withdraw the child. Under such circumstances, all advanced tuition will be refunded.

## **Confidentiality**

Student files, including teaching strategy assessments, are confidential. They may be accessed by the State of Vermont, Windham Central Supervisory Union, and other partnership supervisory unions such as Windham Southeast (depending on your district) for audit purposes of our NAEYC accreditation and Act 166, and for Kindergarten registration/education. Parents may make a request for a copy of assessments in writing.

## **Appendix B: Snack Suggestions...**

Below is a list of things that children enjoy for snack. Please choose one item from at least two of the categories (a fruit or vegetable **and** a carbohydrate or protein). If possible, try to prepare the snack “ready to eat.” We provide water to drink.

Please check with teachers to see if there are any allergy concerns to be aware of this year when preparing/purchasing snack.

### **Protein:**

Sunflower or pumpkin seeds  
Peaches  
Yogurt  
Cottage cheese  
Kiwi  
  
Hummus  
Other cheeses  
Tofu

### **Fruits and Vegetables:**

Melons  
Cooked Peas  
Pears or apples  
Bananas  
  
Grapes – cut in half  
Plums  
Mangos, Starfruit  
Carrots, Celery – in matchsticks  
Squash, Broccoli

### **Snack Combo Ideas**

Carrots w/ blueberry muffins  
Bagels w/ butter and peaches  
  
Pita w/ hummus and apples  
Pasta w/ broccoli and cheese  
Tortillas w/ cheese and sweet peppers  
Yogurt w/ raisins and breadsticks  
Cooked peas and cooked corn w/ a thin spread of almond butter sandwiches  
Tofu w/ cooked green beans

### **Carbohydrates:**

Bread, muffins, or cereal  
Bagels or English muffins  
Pita bread, tortillas, or roll-up  
Crackers or rice cakes  
Rice pudding

## **Appendix C: Guide for Safeguarding Health...**

### **When Can a Sick Child Return to the Preschool?**

<b>Disease</b>	<b>Time</b>
Chickenpox	Six days after the rash breaks out or when all the blisters are scabbed over, whichever is sooner.
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	If the eyes are watery or itchy but there is no fever, the child doesn't have to stay home at all. If the eye discharge is thick and white or yellow, the child should stay home until the discharge has stopped.
Diarrhea	When diarrhea has stopped.
Hepatitis A	One week after the illness or yellow color starts.
Cold Sores	When sores are dry and crusted.
Impetigo	24 hours after the child starts using antibiotic medication.
Measles	Five days after the rash breaks out.
Mumps	Nine days after the swelling starts.
Whooping cough	After the first five days of taking antibiotics.
Tuberculosis	When the child's doctor or the local health department says the infection is no longer catching; in children this happens soon after the medication is started.
Strep throat	24 hours after antibiotics are started.
Pin worms	24 hours after treatment.
Ringworm	If the area can be kept covered, the child need not stay home. If it can't be covered, the child can come back after treatment begins and the patch of ringworm starts to shrink.
Rubella	Six days after the rash appears and the Health Department says it's safe. Advise any staff member who is pregnant to see her doctor.
Diphtheria	When the Health Department says it's safe.
Hand-foot-mouth	Children with an open, draining sore on the hand and those with disease mouth sores (if the child drools) should be kept out of the Preschool. They can return when the sores heal or the drooling stops.

### **Head Lice and Scabies**

#### **Q**

Please notify the Director immediately if your child is diagnosed with head lice or scabies. Lice cases may return after appropriate treatment is completed and nits are removed. We request that children be nit-free when attending school. Children with

scabies, pinworm infection, and ringworm infection may return 48 hours after treatment is initiated.

### **Timson Hill Preschool Wellness Policy**

If a child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or more, the child's parents will be notified to pick up their child at school. Your child cannot come to school until they have a temperature below 100.4 degrees for more than twenty-four hours without the use of a temperature reducing medication (tylenol, ibuprofen).

If a child vomits at school, the child's parents will be notified to pick up their child.

If a child has 2 or more vomiting episodes, the child needs to be vomit free for twenty-four hours before returning to school.

If a child is lethargic and appears sick, the parents will be notified to pick up their child from school.

This policy is recommended through the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Please see page 17 in the Timson Hill Preschool Handbook for other wellness policy guidelines.