



# Aspen Leaf **P R E S C H O O L** & NURSERY

Family Handbook & Policies  
August 2025 – July 2026  
North Park, Hillcrest & University Heights

## WELCOME TO ASPEN LEAF PRESCHOOL

At Aspen Leaf Preschool, we aim to provide the highest quality early childhood education to our children. We offer a safe, calm, engaging environment designed to promote a love of learning through play, curiosity, and exploration, and which focuses on social and emotional development. Our children learn literacy skills, math, and science through an emergent curriculum, which structures lessons and activities around the children's burgeoning interests. We emphasize communication and collaboration among teachers and parents to promote consistency and continuity for the children between school and home.

## OUR PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

At Aspen Leaf Preschool, we believe that play is children's work. When children play, they are learning about the world around them. When they run, jump, and climb they are learning about spatial relationships and about how their bodies move. When they build, children engage in mathematical thinking and develop motor skills. When children participate in dramatic play, they are practicing abstract thinking and learning social studies. As children play with their classmates throughout the day, they learn important social skills. These interactions teach them how to negotiate and communicate with peers and adults.

Our indoor classrooms are designed to promote cooperative play and exploration. Each room contains a variety of learning centers where the children can build, play pretend, investigate science themes, make art, and read. At Aspen Leaf Preschool, we aim to create a calm and home-like atmosphere where children feel comfortable and safe. The child-friendly setup of our classrooms encourages independence and a hands-on approach to learning.

We also believe that the outdoor classroom is just as important as the indoor one. Our safe, private playground eschews artificial structures and is instead designed to allow children to explore nature. Outdoor learning centers include a school garden, water play station, weather station, art area, and more. While playing outdoors, the children also develop large motor skills as they climb, run, jump, dig, and ride bikes.

The infant center has a written plan to ensure the provision of indoor and outdoor activities designed to meet the needs of infants, which include but are not limited to: quiet and active play, rest and relaxation, eating, toileting, individual attention, and being held by a caregiver.

## INFANT & TODDLER ROOMS (NORTH PARK & UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS)

The infant and toddler staffs provide a warm, safe, and nurturing environment for the children. The environment incorporates a variety of touch and movement experiences.

Before the child begins participating in the program, the family meets with a member of the program staff for an intake meeting to discuss the child's history, individual needs, and what the family hopes to gain from participating in the program. At the meeting, the staff and family will agree upon the required Infant Needs and Services Plan for the child. This will be done for every child in the infant and toddler programs and is a requirement of the childcare licensing agency. The plan will include individual provisions for eating, sleeping, and diapering/toileting. It will be updated every three months, or more often as necessary.

## COMMUNICATION

Communication is very important to us. When we accept a new family into our school, we like to be sure that we can share openly any concerns or questions that may arise. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for your child. Routine information, questions, or requests (such as a reminder about an outstanding tuition balance) will be sent by email, as we typically turn to those items in the evening, after school hours. Sensitive issues will be discussed in private either by telephone or conference.

Parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled as a routine part of your child's care; however, if you would like to schedule a conference to discuss a particular concern, you may request one at any time.

Our teachers send daily reports by email (via an app called BrightWheel), that contain information about the activities we are doing, our current curriculum themes, and details about your child's day. The BrightWheel reports sometimes contain pictures or videos. While we strive to send BrightWheel reports daily, occasionally our teachers do not have time to create the reports.

If you would like to contact any of the teachers, email is best. You may call the school at any time between the hours of 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. However, please be aware that we may be busy with the children and may not be able to answer the phone. If you leave a message on our voicemail, we will get back to you as soon as possible, either by phone or by email.

We encourage open and honest communication. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, a director, or Howard and Bridget with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. We pride ourselves on listening and being responsive.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION

Aspen Leaf Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

### SPECIAL NEEDS

Aspen Leaf Preschool accepts children with special needs if we can reasonably accommodate them. We will work with you, your child's doctors, therapists, and other professionals to ensure that your child gets the appropriate care. If we are unable to accommodate the needs of your child, we may refer you to a more suitable location.

### LIST OF SUPPLIES TO BRING ON YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY

You are responsible for supplying the following items (*labeled with your child's name*) to be used while at preschool:

- ☐ Diapers and wipes if your child is not potty trained
- ☐ A complete change of clothes to be kept in your child's cubby
- ☐ If your child is potty training, please also provide an extra pair of shoes and socks
- ☐ A bathing suit and towel in the summer for water play
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Lunch
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ *[If your child will be attending full day]* Blanket and sheet for naptime (our nap mats fit a standard crib sheet)

### APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR PRESCHOOL

The clothing that children wear to school should be loose fitting and comfortable so that they can easily participate in activities. We spend about two hours outside every day in the playground and taking walks around the neighborhood. Even when the weather is rainy, we take the children outside for at least a short while. Please make sure that your child is dressed for the weather and for active play. Flip-flops are not appropriate for children to wear to preschool and can lead to injury. It is best to dress your child in close-toed Velcro or slip-on shoes (though children may go barefoot in the playground).

We believe that children learn best through hands-on activities. These often involve paint, water, mud, and other fun, messy substances. We don't use smocks for painting or sensory activities because the extra layer impedes the children's ability to explore materials. By the end of the day, your child will often be quite dirty. Please dress your child in clothes that they can get messy.

As mentioned earlier, we encourage all of the children at Aspen Leaf to be as independent as is developmentally appropriate. Even the youngest children are capable of dressing themselves if the clothing is easy to put on. The best options are loose fitting shirts and dresses, pants with elastic waistbands, and Velcro or slip-on shoes in the appropriate size. Your child will gain confidence and a sense of pride as he or she learns to complete tasks unassisted!

### ENROLLMENT POLICY

Aspen Leaf Preschool-North Park accepts children ages 6 months to Kindergarten age. Aspen Leaf Preschool-Hillcrest accepts children 2 to Kindergarten age. Aspen Leaf Nursery-University Heights accepts children ages 3 months to Kindergarten age. Before a child begins participating in the program, the family meets with a member of the program staff for a pre-interview to discuss the child's history, individual needs, and what the family hopes to gain from participating in the program. There are several forms that **must** be completed **before** we can assume the responsibility of caring for your child, in accordance with licensing regulations. We cannot allow a child to attend school before we have the following forms completed. This is to ensure compliance with state and local law, and that your child will get the very best care from us. The forms are:

- ☐ Signed Enrollment Agreement
- ☐ Child's Preadmission Health History - Parent's Report
- ☐ Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- ☐ Notification of Parent's Rights
- ☐ Personal Rights Notification
- ☐ Physician's Report *(to be completed by pediatrician – must be received within a week of starting)*
- ☐ Immunization Record
- ☐ Identification and Emergency Information
- ☐ Authorization for the Administration of Medication *(if necessary)*
- ☐ Picture Permission Form
- ☐ Field Trip Permission Form

You are required to keep us informed of any change in addresses, telephone numbers, and other pertinent information listed on the above forms. If you have any questions regarding these forms, please feel free to ask.

### STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Student and family information is kept confidential and monitored only by the school administration. Occasionally, records are reviewed by regulatory agencies for information pertaining to a child's well being. These regulatory agencies also have the authority to interview children during a site visit.

### PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Your specific rate will be outlined in your Enrollment Agreement, and/or as modified by email from time-to-time. You will be given a minimum of 60 days notice of any increase in your fee. Tuition rates are based upon the classroom the child is enrolled in, not the child's age (e.g., a 25-month-old in the toddler classroom is subject to the toddler tuition rate so long as enrolled in the toddler classroom). Payment is payable in advance and is due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month for that month. Nonpayment is grounds for termination of enrollment.

Aspen Leaf may require a deposit equal to one month's tuition, to be held and applied to a future month (including your child's final month). A family's final month is pro-rated as applicable.

There will be no refunds or adjustments made to your preschool fee for time missed due to illness; holidays; vacation; days off; or any unplanned closures including due to COVID, whether imposed by Aspen Leaf or required by state, county, or local authorities. In the event of illness, holiday, vacation, days off, or other closures, payment is still due in advance. Tuition is the same each month regardless of the number of school days or school closures, whether

planned or unplanned, except that your last month will be pro-rated if applicable, and based upon receipt of at least 60 days notice from you (see below).

### ANNUAL COMMITMENT

New for 2025-2026 is annual pricing for UTK-age children (children 4 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>). The specific amount will be listed in the family's admission agreement and is payable in monthly installments. The sibling discount and extended leave policies will be applied to the annual pricing, if applicable. As an annual commitment, the full amount listed in the admission agreement is due to be paid as specified in the admission agreement, and termination of services by the family does not waive, terminate, or excuse the obligation to pay. The only exception to this policy is for military families who agree to the annual commitment but subsequently receive orders to move outside San Diego. If Aspen Leaf terminates enrollment of a child enrolled under the annual commitment, tuition will be pro-rated accordingly.

### PAYMENT METHODS

We accept the following methods of payment:

- **ACH direct debit (preferred).** Information and sign-up available at [www.aspenleafpreschool.com/ACH](http://www.aspenleafpreschool.com/ACH).
- Cash or check (made out to Aspen Leaf Preschool)
- Zelle ([howard@aspenleafpreschool.com](mailto:howard@aspenleafpreschool.com))
- Venmo (@AspenLeafPreschool) (last-4 1694)
- Online Bill Pay – check your online banking for details

If a check is returned for non-payment, we reserve the right to require payment by other method. Checks must be dated for the day they are due; no post-dated checks will be accepted.

### RETURNED CHECKS

If a check is returned to us for non-sufficient funds, you will be required to pay all fees that we incur as a result of the returned check. Preschool services may be immediately halted until full payment of tuition and charges has been made.

### LATE PAYMENT FEE

There will be a late fee of \$10 for each business day that payment is late.

### DROP-IN DAYS

Drop-in days are permitted based on availability and must be arranged with Aspen Leaf Preschool in advance. **The drop-in rate for all classes is \$100/day.**

### MAKE-UP DAYS

Make-up days do not accrue due to illness, vacation, holiday, closure, or any other reason. Aspen Leaf may offer make-up days as a courtesy. The availability of make-up days is entirely discretionary and, when offered, must be made up within 30 days of the day missed.

### TAXES

We utilize Zoho Billing for online invoicing. The Zoho Billing customer portal provides you access to all invoices and recorded payments, and includes all information necessary for tax purposes, including our tax ID number (45-5524403). You will receive an initial email invitation to access the customer portal. If you need a new invitation, email [howard@aspenleafpreschool.com](mailto:howard@aspenleafpreschool.com) or [marieva@aspenleafpreschool.com](mailto:marieva@aspenleafpreschool.com).

### EXTENDED LEAVE

If your child will not be attending school for three to five consecutive full weeks, you may pay 50% of your child's tuition rate for the period of your child's extended leave to hold your child's space in his or her classroom, up to a maximum of five weeks, once per school year. Scheduled closures (e.g. winter holiday closure or spring break) are not included when calculating the number of consecutive weeks absent.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Normal hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

We do occasionally accept children for drop-in care if we have a space available on a given day. We do this as a service to our families and not as an additional revenue stream. If you tell us that you will not be bringing your child to school on a particular day, there is a chance we will fill your spot for that day and you could potentially lose your day if we do so. Therefore, please give us a minimum of 48-hours notice if you change your mind and want/need to bring your child in on a day that you had previously told us your child would not be attending school.

You are required to inform us if you are at any location other than those listed on your contact information form and to provide a telephone number for that place in case we should need to get in touch with you.

Please notify us by 8:00 a.m. if your child will not be coming for the day or if you will be late in arriving, so the teachers can plan accordingly.

Out of consideration for our teachers, please arrive before 9:15 a.m. The preschool day starts with circle time at 9:15 and it is difficult for teachers to maintain the children's attention when people are coming and going.

### ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

It is normal for some children to have difficulty separating from parents, or to cry when being dropped off. Please be very brief (5 minutes is generally more than sufficient) during drop-off times; the longer you prolong the departure the harder it gets for the child. A smile, cheerful good-bye kiss, and a reassuring word that you will be back are all that is needed. In our experience, children are nearly always quick to get involved in play or activities as soon as parents are gone.

Please be brief at pick-up times also. This is a time of testing when two different authority figures are present (the parent and the teacher), and children will test to see if the rules still apply. An early arrival to pick up your child does not mean you may stay until the close of business. If you'd like to stay and visit, please arrange this with your child's teacher beforehand. But typically pick-up time needs to be kept brief.

During arrivals and departures, we expect you to back up our rules (see House Rules), but if you do not, our teachers will remind your child that their behavior is inappropriate and take action to correct it, if needed. Please be in control of your child during these times.

We prefer that there are no pick-ups or drop-offs during the designated daily quiet time (1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.), but we understand that sometimes it is necessary. Please be as quiet and brief as possible. Children who arrive during quiet time will be expected to remain quiet (they may play/read quietly) until quiet time is over, so that others will not be disrupted from their naps.

Do not allow your child to run out to your car while you are still inside the school or on the playground! The safety rule is "No one goes outside without their parent with them."

Drop-off and pick-up times are not good times to discuss problems. Little ears and minds hear and understand everything. We are not comfortable discussing children in the presence of anyone except their parents. Topics that concern day-to-day events, or light-hearted discussions are fine.

Our normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents/guardian or someone else the parents/guardian designates. If someone other than the parent is to pick-up the child, please notify the school ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on that day if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on that list, we MUST have written permission to release your child. Please inform emergency contacts, or people designated to pick up your child that, if the teachers do not know them, they will ask for photo identification. We do not mean to offend them; this is simply a measure taken for your child's protection. We will not let a child leave without a parent's verbal permission even if that person is listed as one of your designated pick-up people.

### SIGNING IN & OUT

We are required to have all families sign in and out for pick-up and drop-off each day. Licensing requires that full names be written for both the child and the adult. A sign in/out sheet, a pen, and a clock are located by the door for your convenience. On the sign in/out sheet, you must note the time you dropped off or picked up your child. This gives us a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who dropped off/picked up the child each day. This is also important so that we know exactly how many children are in attendance each day.

### LATE FEES

Our hours are 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Pick-ups that occur after 6:00 p.m. are subject to a late fee of \$30.00 per 15 minutes. That amount is not pro-rated. (Example: If you pick your child up at 6:10 p.m., you will incur a late fee of \$30.00. If you pick your child up at 6:20 p.m., the late fee will be \$60.00.) If you are unavoidably detained and know that you are going to be late picking up your child, please call and let us know. Our teachers are scheduled based on the number of children expected to be in the school. If you are going to be late, we may have to arrange for additional teachers or ask teachers to stay beyond their normally scheduled hours.

It is your responsibility to have your child picked up on time. If you know you will be unavoidably late, it is your responsibility to have an authorized alternate person pick up your child. The above late fees will also be charged to you if another person is late. These rules will be strictly enforced, and habitual tardiness may result in termination of services.

### OPEN DOOR POLICY

Aspen Leaf Preschool maintains an open-door policy for parents. This means that you may call or stop by to check in on your child at any time during regular preschool hours. However, if you would like to help out in the classroom or share a book or activity with the class, please speak with your child's teacher to schedule a visit. Please understand that visitors (even with the best of intentions) can disrupt the classroom and routines.

Our open-door policy does NOT mean that our door will be kept unlocked. We believe that it is extremely important to keep the doors locked for the safety of the children. We do not want unwanted or unexpected visitors to enter without our permission or knowledge. We also do not want little ones leaving the school unsupervised. Your child's safety is our first priority. We would appreciate your taking into consideration the daily schedule when dropping in or calling, and remember that visitors usually cause children to react in an excited manner that does not normally occur when visitors are not present.

### PERSONAL BELONGINGS

We do allow children to bring toys and personal items from home as long as these items are not disruptive. Young children are learning about personal property and sharing. When a child brings an item from home, we encourage, but do not require, them to share it with their classmates. In our experience, children cannot learn to share until they

understand what personal property is. When they bring their own items from home into a school setting where all the school toys belong to everyone, they can begin to understand the difference between personal property and public property. They learn to be responsible for their own property and learn the joy they can give to other children when they choose to share their personal toys. If you do allow your child to bring toys from home, please be aware that Aspen Leaf Preschool is not responsible for any loss or breakage of your child's personal items. All personal items must be clearly marked with your child's name. **Toy guns and weapons are never allowed.**

### DAILY SCHEDULE

Young children enjoy a structured schedule that allows for flexibility. A schedule helps the day to flow more smoothly, allows the children to anticipate coming events, and aids in achieving a variety of goals. There is a posted daily schedule on the bulletin board that is adhered to as much as possible. Because every day is different and young children are often unpredictable, slight changes may be made to the schedule during the day.

### MEALS

At Aspen Leaf Preschool, we provide two nutritious snacks to the children every day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A snack menu is posted on the bulletin board. Each of the snacks we provide incorporates food from at least two food groups. You are responsible for providing a lunch for your child. Please include an icepack in the lunch box or place it in the refrigerator if there are perishable items. **Please do not pack soda with your child's lunch.**

We believe meal and snack times should be pleasant times; therefore, children are always offered food but are not forced to eat it. We do encourage each child to try one or two bites of everything. Sometimes they are surprised by what they like!

We strive to help children develop a healthy attitude towards food. To that end, we do not use food (including sweets or desserts) as rewards. If you opt to include dessert with your child's lunch, we will not require your child to eat some or all of their lunch before eating dessert. A child may therefore choose to eat his or her dessert before eating lunch.

### INFANT DIETS (NORTH PARK & UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS)

If your child is an infant and requires baby food, formula, and/or breast milk, these should be brought from home.

- All bottles and baby food must be prepared at home and labeled beforehand.
- Bottles must be unbreakable.
- Babies are given their bottle only in designated places. They are not permitted to roam with the bottle, as this makes it difficult to prevent sharing bottles.

All special instructions for feeding plans will be discussed with the child's teacher before enrollment, and will be included in the Needs and Services Plan, which will be updated every three months or sooner as needed.

### PEANUT FREE

Aspen Leaf Preschool is a peanut-free preschool. Please do not pack foods for your children that contain peanuts.

### CLEANLINESS & HYGIENE

We do our best to maintain strict cleanliness and hygiene standards. Children are taught to wash their hands before and after meals and after toileting. We use paper towels for drying hands, so children do not have to use the same towel. Teachers wash their hands frequently and also use antibacterial gel. For naptime, washable nap mats are used. Each child has a separate nap mat. **Nap sheets, blankets and pillows should be taken home at least weekly to be washed** (unless soiled, in which case linens should be taken home immediately to be cleaned).



Children use separate cups, plates, bowls and eating utensils that have been washed in the dishwasher and dried on the heat setting. Trays, tables, etc. are disinfected with a natural disinfectant after each use. Classroom toys are also disinfected with a natural disinfectant solution on a regular basis.

Infant room toys and surfaces are washed and disinfected daily. Infant room floors are vacuumed, swept, and/or mopped with disinfecting solution at least daily, and more often if necessary. Rugs are vacuumed daily and washed twice annually at a minimum, and more frequently as necessary. Infant bedding is washed daily.

### TOILET TRAINING

Aspen Leaf Preschool requires that children three years of age or older be potty trained before enrollment. Aspen Leaf Preschool accepts children under three years old who are not potty trained, and we are happy to assist with potty training. Only disposable diapers may be used.

If potty training is necessary, it will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family. If potty training is begun when your child is ready, the task is easy and quick. If a parent undertakes the task of potty training when they want it to happen, the task can be arduous and painful for all. When we agree that the time is right for your child, and until he/she is completely successful in his/her toileting, he/she should wear clothes that promote independence. In addition, your child must have two complete changes of clothes (don't forget the socks!) and an extra pair of shoes. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try to avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers and belts, overalls, and onesies. These are difficult for children to remove "in a hurry." Do not bring your child in panties or underwear without consulting with his/her teacher. During the early stages of potty training, it may still be necessary to provide diapers or pull-ups for naptime.

Your child's readiness is something we should discuss because consistency between home and school will be very important. This is a special time for your child, a sign that he or she is growing up. Potty training should be a good experience.

Toilet training for infants and toddlers will be done in accordance with each child's individual Needs and Services Plan. We do not use food treats as a reward for toilet training (see *Meals* section).

### NAPS & QUIET TIME

We provide a nap/quiet time for the children every afternoon. This is an opportunity for children to rest and take a break from the busier activities of the morning. Children are not required to sleep but we do ask that if they do not sleep, they choose a quiet activity (books, puzzles, drawing, etc.) so as not to disturb the children who are sleeping.

We provide nap mats and you are responsible for providing a blanket and sheet. If your child has a special blanket or stuffed animal that helps him/her to sleep at home, please bring it along.

Cribs and cots for infants are located in a separate sleeping area that can be used as individual schedules and needs demand. No child is forced to sleep or stay awake.

### CURRICULUM

At Aspen Leaf Preschool, we utilize an emergent curriculum, which structures lessons and activities around the children's burgeoning interests. The children learn language, math, science, and social studies through a variety of activities that are centered around topics that "emerge" from observing the children.

The following is an example of how emergent curriculum works:

One morning, the teacher noticed a small group of children building “rockets” in the block area. After quietly observing them for a few minutes, she asked where their rockets were going. They answered that the rockets were going to space. After several more questions, they informed the teacher that the rocket ship held astronauts and that space contains stars, planets, and a moon.

Later, at circle time, the teacher brought up the subject of rockets again. This time the whole class was involved in the discussion. After a few minutes, the group started talking about what the astronauts would see and do in space. The children suggested that the astronauts would fly around and that they would come to the school. At this point, the teacher brought out the iPad and showed the children a video of a real spaceship taking off and another of astronauts walking on the moon.

For the next three weeks, all of the children were crazy about space. By observing the children during free playtime and asking questions, the teacher was able to discover what the children were interested in. Once it was apparent that the children wanted to learn about space, the teacher was able to guide them in their learning by offering books, songs, dramatic play opportunities, and projects on the topic of space.

This is an example of how emergent curriculum works. Our experienced teachers observe and talk to the children to discern what they would like to learn. Once a topic is chosen, the teachers set up the learning environment to encourage exploration of the topic. Together with the children, they select and plan activities that revolve around the topic. These activities can include number and letter games, art projects, field trips, and more.

#### FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

There will be times and ways you can get involved in your child's preschool experience. You are welcome and encouraged to participate in any or all of these. Some examples of ways to be involved include:

- Chaperoning on field trips
- Lending objects for units of study
- Coming and talking about your job, when asked
- Helping your child at home with the concepts we are studying here
- Helping your child prepare for "Show and Share"
- Helping to provide treats or other items for our parties

#### BIRTHDAYS & PARTIES

Each child's birthday is his or her "Special Day." If you wish to celebrate at school, it will be your responsibility to provide a cake, cupcakes, or treats for your child's special day. Please let your child's teacher know in advance if you are planning to bring in treats.

Throughout the year, we have various parties and holiday celebrations. These will be announced a few weeks in advance via the Bright Wheel reports or email, and if parent volunteers are needed, volunteer sign-up sheets will be posted with the sign-in sheets or Google Docs (or similar online service).

#### HOUSE RULES

The children at Aspen Leaf Preschool will be taught and are expected to follow the following rules. These rules are enforced for the safety and well being of everyone.

- Walking feet are to be used inside of the building and running feet are allowed only outside.
- Hands, feet, teeth and body parts must be used appropriately. Hitting, pushing, biting, grabbing, kicking, spitting, or pinching other children and adults is never allowed.
- Chairs are for sitting, not climbing or standing on.
- Shelves and tables are for food, toys, etc., and not for climbing.

- Words are not for hurting. Obscene, derogatory, or disrespectful language is not allowed.
- When eating or drinking, children must be seated to avoid falling and possibly choking. Adults should set an example by doing the same.
- Respectful treatment of other people and all property, toys, and furniture is expected.

These rules are meant to ensure that everyone is safe. As mentioned earlier, if you are in the building with your child, please enforce these rules. If you do not correct your child, a teacher may remind him or her of the rule and correct the behavior in an appropriate way. Please support us in enforcing these rules in order to create a better environment for all.

### NO SMOKING

No smoking is permitted on the premises. Electronic cigarettes are also prohibited.

### INDOOR & OUTDOOR PLAY

Indoor play: We provide a variety of age-appropriate toys and activities for indoor play. The classroom environment is continually updated, rearranged, and changed to keep up with the children's development and interests. Although we encourage all children to try new things and to participate, they are never forced to join in any activity.

Outdoor play: We will be playing outdoors every day when weather permits. Please make sure that your child is appropriately dressed for outdoor play. Our activities will include taking walks, playground time, water play (sprinkler or wading pool in summer), bike/toy riding, sandbox, and more.

### CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT & POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

At Aspen Leaf Preschool we teach all children to respect other people and to respect property. We use a positive approach to discipline and encourage children to become good decision makers.

In our experience, the best way to avoid inappropriate behavior is to have fully supervised, well-structured, age-appropriate classrooms and activities. Most disruptive behavior occurs when children are bored or when there are not enough materials to go around. For this reason, our first course of action is to set up and supply our learning environments so that conflicts and inappropriate behavior are not likely to happen.

When inappropriate behavior does occur, the following methods will be used to address it:

- Encourage children to solve problems themselves
- Intervention and discussion
- Re-direction to another play area

Time-outs and corporal punishment are never used including spanking. A child is never subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, isolation, or verbal abuse. A child is never denied food or forced food as a form of punishment. A child is never punished for wetting, soiling, or not using the toilet. Confinement to cribs, high chairs, playpens or other similar furniture or equipment shall not be permitted as a form of discipline or punishment.

All staff will model a sense of control in demeanor, touch, and voice. Staff will be firm in their limitations when they are appropriate to the situation and the child's ability to understand and comply. Staff will be consistent and work as a team with other staff and parents. The staff will analyze possible reasons for behavior problems and make whatever adjustments in the environment that can be made. They will offer choices and redirect activity, point out natural or logical consequences of different behaviors, and try to help the child problem solve individually or in a group setting. Staff will also give hugs and words of encouragement.

Our goal is to promote the child's self-esteem through practicing positive non-evaluative guidance, providing

experiences that match the children's developmental level, and meeting their needs in a responsive, nurturing manner.

All Aspen Leaf Preschool staff is expected to:

- Be kind, matter of fact and composed at all times.
- Be positive in word and attitude when you must set and maintain limits.
- Offer choices when possible.
- Refrain from discussing a child in his or her presence.
- Refrain from visiting other adults while in the classroom.
- Avoid labeling (positive and negative) of a child.
- Refrain from tickling, throwing children up in the air, or any other type of physical contact other than that of nurturing.

To enforce boundaries and rules, Aspen Leaf Preschool staff will use the following techniques with the children:

- Clear statement of the limit. ("Blocks are for building; balls are for throwing.")
- Stating expectations positively. ("Let's use the blocks for building a tower.")
- Redirection. ("Let's pick a puzzle to work on.")
- Supporting problem-solving and negotiation between the children. ("How could you use your words to tell Justin that you would like to have a turn with that truck?")
- Logical consequences or choices. ("You are having a hard time playing with blocks without throwing: You need to make another choice: do you want to play with play dough or work on a puzzle?")
- Modeling effective ways to express feelings and emotions. ("I do not like it when you grab the book from my hands. Which words could you use to let me know that you would like to look at the book next?" When talking to toddlers, give the appropriate script such as, "Layla, say, Can I have the book, please?")

If the child displays repeated inappropriate behavior and shows little progress toward changing that behavior, Aspen Leaf Preschool staff may call upon the child's parent(s) to work cooperatively in developing strategies that will meet the child's needs.

Any disciplinary action that warrants calling the parent(s) will be documented and kept in the respective child's file.

### ILLNESS POLICY

It is a licensing requirement that sick children cannot attend preschool. Children will be screened at drop-off for general health and the below symptoms. If a child is exhibiting symptoms, we will require the child be taken home. The decision to send a child home due to illness often requires the exercise of judgment on the part of Aspen Leaf Preschool and is in the full discretion of Aspen Leaf. If we observe that your child is showing symptoms of illness while in our care, we may isolate him/her so as not to spread the illness to other children and will notify you immediately and require your child be taken home. If you cannot be reached, we may contact your emergency contact. For the health of all children in our care, we require that a child remain at home until he/she is symptom free for at least 24 hours (or longer for particular symptoms).

***Symptoms that require a child to be kept home.*** If your child is showing any of the following symptoms before coming to preschool, please keep him or her home. Children can return when symptom free for at least 24 hours.

- Fever (100°F body temperature, meaning over 98.9°F when measured under the arm or 99.9 orally)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Runny nose with colored nasal discharge (typically green or yellow)
- Diarrhea

- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of taste or smell
- Headache
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Myalgia (muscle pain) or abdominal pain
- Fatigue or poor appetite/poor feeding
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or “cold in the eye”
- Mouth sores
- Unusual rash
- Infected skin patches
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Grey or white stool
- Head lice (can return when nits removed *and* after treatment has been professionally administered)
- Contagious illness of any sort that results in child being too ill to participate in daily activities

### IMMUNIZATIONS

Per California law, we require all children to be immunized on schedule or have a valid medical exemption.

### MEDICATIONS

All medication, including nonprescription and prescription medications, ointments, and creams must be in their original containers. All medications must have an expiration date and will be stored in a locked box out of reach of the children. Diaper creams and sunscreen are not required to be stored in the locked box. Please do not send any medication in your child’s bag or pocket and do not store them in his/her cubby.

No medication (nonprescription or prescription) will be administered until you have filled out the appropriate authorization form. These forms are available in the school office. These forms are valid for 7 days from the date of the signature and must include the exact times that the medication is to be administered and the exact dosage. All medication must be labeled with the child’s name. We shall not exceed the manufacturer’s recommended dosage unless we receive written physician’s instructions when administering nonprescription medication. We shall not administer nonprescription oral medication for longer than 3 consecutive days. We shall not administer nonprescription topical ointments, creams, or lotions for longer than 14 consecutive days when used for skin irritations.

For information regarding the administration of incidental medication, please see this handbook’s Addendum Procedures for Administration of Incidental Medication.

### ALLERGIES

If your child has any known allergies or food restrictions, they must be listed on the Preadmission Health History Report at the time of enrollment and updated on a regular basis. You must also prepare a special care plan that includes written descriptions of the food or item that the child is allergic to and written instructions on how to avoid the allergen. You must also include a detailed plan of action in the case that your child has an allergic reaction. This plan must have descriptions of the symptoms that will indicate an allergic reaction and the name, dosage, and method of administration of any necessary medications. The appropriate medication forms must be completed.

### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of emergency, we will administer the necessary first aid. The police department or paramedic unit will be called and your child will be transported to the hospital designated on your Emergency Transportation Authorization form. You will be notified immediately. You are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation, if required.

### DENTAL EMERGENCIES

In case of dental emergency, we will administer the necessary first aid. The police department or paramedic unit will be called and your child will be transported to the dentist designated on your Emergency Transportation Authorization form. You will be notified immediately. You are responsible for all costs involved in emergency dental treatment, including emergency transportation, if required.

### FIRE SAFETY

We have written emergency plans and practice emergency drills with the children regularly. In addition, we incorporate fire and earthquake safety curriculum into the program occasionally. Aspen Leaf Preschool is inspected regularly for safety.

### EVACUATION PROTOCOL

In the event that North Park must be evacuated, the designated meeting place for North Park is Bird Park:

Bird Park  
28<sup>th</sup> St. & Thorn St.  
San Diego, CA 92104

In the event that Hillcrest must be evacuated, the designated meeting place for Hillcrest is Marston House Museum & Gardens, located at the northwest corner of Balboa Park:

Marston House Museum & Gardens  
3525 7<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
San Diego, CA 92103

In the event that University Heights must be evacuated, the designated meeting place for University Heights is Trolley Barn Park:

Trolley Barn Park  
Adams Ave. & Florida St.  
San Diego, CA 92116

### FIELD TRIPS

Occasionally, we may have the opportunity to take a field trip. All children will be placed in safety-approved car seats as required by State laws. You may be requested to provide a car seat for the day and/or pay any fees associated with the trip. You will be required to sign a permission slip that the teachers will carry with them on the trip. The teachers also carry copies of the emergency forms with a picture of each child attached. In the event of an emergency away from the preschool home, your child will be cared for and you will be notified.

### SCHEDULE CHANGES

Families with part-time schedules who wish to increase to full-time or switch their part-time schedule should contact Aspen Leaf's enrollment coordinator ([marieva@aspenleafpreschool.com](mailto:marieva@aspenleafpreschool.com)) with their request. Part-time families have priority over families on the waitlist when space in the class opens up.

Families with a full-time schedule wishing to reduce to a part-time schedule must provide 60-day notice before the change, during which time full-time tuition will continue to be due.

## TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Aspen Leaf Preschool reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at its discretion, for any reason, at any time. However, it is extraordinarily rare for Aspen Leaf to terminate a child's enrollment. The decision historically has only been made once it was clear that Aspen Leaf could not meet the child's needs, or when parents exhibited a total lack of cooperation.

The decision to terminate enrollment is based on the best interest of everyone involved. Every effort is made to correct the issue before a final decision to terminate is reached (such efforts typically span months and include working with the family and often physicians or therapists to find a solution to the underlying issue). When Aspen Leaf terminates a child's enrollment, we endeavor to provide as much notice as practicable to allow families to seek alternate childcare arrangements. Respectfully raising concerns or complaints has never been grounds for terminating enrollment, and we in fact encourage families to come to us with questions or concerns so they can be discussed.

Certain actions (typically on the part of parents/guardians) may result in immediate termination without advance notice. These include but are not limited to:

- Physical or verbal abuse or intimidation
- Intentionally defying Aspen Leaf's rules or instructions
- Providing false information
- Any behavior that is clearly "out of bounds" in a civilized society

If you would like to terminate service (for any reason, including relocation or your child's imminent enrollment in kindergarten), we require 60 days' notice. Tuition will be due for the 60-day period even if your child's actual last day in attendance occurs before the 60<sup>th</sup> day.

## REVISIONS TO HANDBOOK AND CONTRACT

This handbook and the accompanying contract are revised annually. All families will sign a new contract each year. We reserve the right to make changes in rates and policies, as we deem necessary. You will be notified in writing at least 60 days in advance of any changes that are instituted.

## HOLIDAYS and CLOSURES

For the most up-to-date calendar and list of scheduled closures, visit [www.aspenleafpreschool.com/calendar](http://www.aspenleafpreschool.com/calendar).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AND UNDERSTANDING

*[Please sign and return this page to Aspen Leaf Preschool]*

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_  
[all parents/guardians], have received a copy of this Family Handbook & Policies (2025-2026), and have read and understand its terms. I hereby agree to abide by all of the terms and conditions set forth in the Family Handbook & Policies. I understand that:

- Tuition is due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, and is not pro-rated or reduced for closures, planned or unplanned.
- Aspen Leaf may require a deposit of one month's tuition to be applied to a future month, including my child's final month.
- I am required to provide 60 days' notice to terminate enrollment or reduce schedule, during which time tuition will continue to be due (*not applicable to annual commitment enrollment*).
- If my child is enrolled pursuant to the annual commitment, I understand I am obligated to pay the full annual tuition as specified in the admission agreement, even if I withdraw my child prior to July 31, 2026.

Parent/Guardian signature:

Date:

Parent/Guardian signature:

Date: