

# green hills pre-school

*We Play on Purpose, since 1968!*

# Parent Handbook

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## **ABOUT OUR PROGRAM**

Green Hills offers a developmentally appropriate Early Childhood Education Program open to all children 2 1/2 through 5 years of age 2-5 days per week, mornings or extended day. The program was created to benefit young children, their parents and the community. Green Hills operates on a school term basis from September through mid-June and offers a special summer term from mid-June to late August.

## **OUR HISTORY**

Green Hills Pre-School is privately owned and operated by Patti & Angelo Aguiar, who as credentialed teachers and administrators, have been educating children from the pre-school to high school level for over thirty-five years. Our campus was founded in 1968 by Lavert & Charles Elkins with the Aguiars operating it since 1979.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY & GOALS**

We believe that an Early Childhood Education Program must promote the child's development socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We work to promote each child's sense of self, individuality and learning style while laying the foundation for literacy and future academic pursuits. We provide a safe setting where children can be guided into constructive and interactive relationships with adults and peers.

We value the uniqueness of the individual child as well as each person's role as part of a larger community. We try to foster an awareness of other people's needs, likeness and differences and help children resist bias as, we believe that this helps to grow caring and compassionate people. We appreciate that all children are a part of a unique family system and we hold these families in high regard. We respect the meaningful partnerships we strive to build with our families.

## **OUR LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

We know that children learn through play so we provide challenging play experiences for children encouraging them to actively explore their surroundings. We facilitate meaningful activities that allow the children to explore, experiment, discover and wonder. We understand that each child's inherent creativity when nourished promotes critical thinking and problem solving abilities.

We offer a combination of teacher-directed and spontaneous activities based on the current interests of the children. We enhance literacy development by utilizing quality children's literature and innovative language activities. We foster an awareness of other people's feelings and support developing friendships. We guide the children in methods of self-control while they practice ways of getting along with others and test out feelings.

## **OUR FACILITY**

Our charming, residential setting offers home-like surroundings in a safe, clean, spacious and well ordered learning environment. Our large outdoor play yard lends itself well to active physical play and social interactions. Our school is fully equipped with high quality equipment and materials that are designed to be appropriate for young children.

## **OUR CURRICULUM**

As a team the teachers and directors plan and develop methods of implementing the program goals. The developmentally appropriate learning experiences we provide promote growth in all developmental areas. The teachers offer planned activities and make on the spot changes in the curriculum for spontaneous learning. We use thematic curriculum units selected to inspire a child's interest and curiosity. This sets the stage for discussions and activities. Our newsletters and teacher's boards state the themes and their dates so that the parent can discuss with the child what is happening at school.

Our curriculum offers ethnically diverse, non-sexist and anti-biased materials and activities through the use of appropriate toys, books, dramas, pictures, foods, music, tools and visitors.

## **DAILY PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

### **DAILY ACTIVITIES**

Arrival Time Play (Indoor /Outdoor, between 8-9am )	
Interest Center Time (approx. 50 min.)	Music & Movement (15-20 minutes)
Snack Time (15-20 minutes)	Outdoor Play (approx. 1 hour)
Small Group (20-30 minutes)	

## **Daily Program Components con't**

### **Interest Center Time:**

Teachers plan and arrange the indoor play area into "Interest Centers". The children are given the freedom to move through the centers at their own pace and interest level. During Interest Center Time activities include: art, cooking, science, pre-math, manipulatives, dramatic play, books, blocks, quiet places, drawing, cutting, playdough, waterplay, etc.

### **Small Group Time:**

Teachers plan activities to help meet the individual needs of the children in their groups. Teachers track development over the course of the school term. Teachers submit progress reports to the parent to help the parent understand how the child is doing on an ongoing basis.

### **Snack Time:**

Snack time is a time for quiet conversation where manners and politeness are prevalent and important. Children enjoy sharing food and drink. Teachers talk about sound health and nutritional practices during school and at home.

### **Music & Movement Time:**

Children learn to be a part of a larger group; learning to wait for a turn and listening for directions are some of the skills that are targeted. Children sing songs, play circle games, participate in movement explorations and take part in dramatics.

### **Outdoor Play:**

Outdoor playtime stimulates physical, social and emotional growth as the children are offered many active experiences. Children have the opportunity to use their motor skills to master outdoor equipment, pretend with friends, paint, work with wood and tools and play with sand and water. Places are also designed into the environment for quiet and solitude.

## **OUR STAFF**

Our early childhood educated teachers are chosen not just for their qualifications and experience but for their warmth and outstanding abilities in interacting with young children and their families. Our teachers interact with the children using questions and comments related to the child's plans, intentions, experiences and observations. Our teaching staff is a team of enthusiastic and supportive adults who are skilled at stimulating each child's current level of development by providing a rich array of materials and activities.

Our teachers and substitutes have been fingerprinted by the state, and have clearances for good health and negative tuberculin tests on file. On site at all times are staff that are pediatric medic/first aid, CPR trained and disease prevention certified. Each teacher participates in a continuous program of in-service education where current research is made available for the professional advancement of teachers. This helps our staff remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's children and families. Their qualifications, experience and photos are listed on the staff bulletin board.

## **PLACEMENT**

### **Teacher/Child Ratios**

The adult to student ratio ranges from 1:7 to 1:10 depending on the child's age and the group placement.

### **Placement**

.Prior to the opening of the school term, the director and teachers using their expertise and professional judgment, place the children in groups according to their chronological age, like schedules and development.

### **Enrollment**

Enrollments are available based on space available, the child's age and requested schedule. Preference is given to returning students, their siblings, and alumni families. New student enrollment begins after the currently enrolled student's re-enrollment process is completed mid-January.

### **To Enroll**

To receive an application for enrollment, a parent must first visit the school and have their questions answered. After completing and submitting the application form and non-refundable application processing fee, parents will receive confirmation of placement or wait list information through the mail. Included in this mailing will be a registration package to be completed prior to enrollment.

Term of Enrollment

Each child is enrolled for the entire term or the balance of the term. For children entering during the school term or leaving before the end, tuition will be prorated daily according to the actual number of school days for the school term. An optional summer term is available mid-June through late August. Should your child enroll after a term begins we require that you come with your child prior to their first day and "shadow" during the peak hours of the program (9am-noon) at least once. Children who become familiar with their teacher and classmates seem to experience less anxiety when their parents leave.

Withdrawal/Termination/Enrollment Changes

Two weeks notice is required for; withdrawal from the program, change of enrollment days or hours. Parents must request changes in writing, all changes are subject to director approval. Full tuition amount will be charged for that period if notice is not given. As school term tuition is divided into 10 equal monthly payments there may be an additional prorated fee for withdrawal prior to the end of the school term. The school reserves the right to drop a member for reasons of non cooperation, delinquency in payment of fees, continued late pick-up, or inability of the child or parent to adjust to the program. Notice of withdrawal of a student made after May 1<sup>st</sup> during the school term or July 1<sup>st</sup> for the summer session are not subject to a refund.

**FINANCIAL POLICIES**

Initial Application Fee

A \$100.00 Application Fee is due and payable with the application and is non-refundable.

Re-Enrollment Fee

A \$50.00 Processing Fee for Re-Enrollment is collected for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> subsequent School Term on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Tuition Deposit

The 1<sup>st</sup> payment is called the \*Tuition Deposit and is equal to the amount of one monthly payment. The Tuition Deposit (Last Months' Payment) is non-refundable and collected once the child is placed to "hold" the child's space until the term begins. The tuition deposit is credited toward the June payment. The tuition deposit is due on or before; March 1<sup>st</sup>: for New Students, Prior to enrollment: for Mid-term enrollees, or July 1<sup>st</sup>: for Re-enrollment for returning students. The following nine payments for school term tuition are due and payable on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month September through May.

Payment of Fees and Discounts:

Tuition may be paid in full or monthly. Special arrangements can be made with the director for bi-monthly or weekly. There is a 5% discount is given to a sibling when children are enrolled concurrently. We offer a 2.5% discount for school term tuition when it is paid in full by Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>. We accept cash or checks as well as Visa & Master Card payments. Credit card payments may be made in the office or tuition fees can be charged automatically on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month with the submission of the Automatic Credit Card Authorization Form.

Miscellaneous Fees & Policies:

Failure to pick your child at the scheduled departure time results in \$1/ minute fine beginning at 12:10 or 2:30. A \$25.00 Late Fee is charged for tuition payments made after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. A \$35.00 fee is charge for Returned Checks or Credit Card charge back. Tuition is prorated on a daily basis for schedule changes, enrolling or withdrawing during the school year and a refund is given for any credit balance.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

It is the parent's responsibility to be sure all people authorized to pick up and drop off the child understand and follow these policies:

Drop Off & Pick Up

Children are to arrive at school by 9am. If a child is going to be late or absent please call in by 10am to inform the school. \*Parents/guardians must walk the child in and out, and help the children get their belongings to and from their cubbie and making sure that staff on duty is aware of the child's arrival and departure. Each child must be signed in upon arrival and departure on the appropriate sign-in sheet by their parent/guardian. These sign-in sheets are our emergency attendance records and must be completed accurately.

## **Arrival & Departure** *con't*

Only persons authorized will be allowed to pick up the child from the school. Staff will not allow a child to leave with anyone not on the I.D. & Emergency Card, unless the parent has given prior written and signed permission. Parents, guardians, and other authorized persons must also sign the child in and out and be prepared to show identification to leave with the child.

Parents must be prompt and pick up their child at the scheduled time. Failure to pick your child at the scheduled departure time results in \$1/ minute fine beginning at 12:10 or 2:30. If a child is picked up late more than three times, the parent will be asked to increase enrollment hours or to find another center that better meets the family's schedule.

### **Parking**

In the driveway--pull up as far as possible. Do not block others from leaving. If you are going to be longer than 2 minutes, please park on the street. George Street parking is only legal across the street from the school and in the 15 min. posted zones.

### **Carpooling**

Because many of our parents live in the area, we encourage the use of carpools. At the beginning of each school year, we will provide a school directory so that parents can contact each other to form carpools. If you do not wish to be included in this list please inform us at the time of enrollment.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

Parents must keep their child home and notify the school if the child has been infected with a contagious disease or rash. Written notification from the child's physician may be required after a communicable illness. When a child is sick at home it is essential for the school to know what the child's symptoms are, so please call in by 10am. Parents are never to send medication in back-packs, lunch boxes, etc. Vitamins, lozenges or any form of pain or cold relievers are not allowed on site unless prescribed in writing by physician and are handled as described below. The use of tranquilizers or sedatives prior to or during school is not permitted. Please notify your child's teacher if your child has been given any medication prior to school.

### **Medications**

FOR A CHILD TO RECEIVE MEDICATION AT SCHOOL:

- 1) Medication must be prescribed by physician.
- 2) It must have pharmacist's label or written and signed notification from physician. and must include doctor's name, dosage amount & time, and expiration date.
- 3) Parent must sign and complete our Consent to Administer Medication form.
- 4) Parents must alert a staff member when any medication is brought into the school, for safe storage as all medications must be stored according to state guidelines.

### **Identification & Emergency Information / Consent for Medical Attention**

At the time of enrollment parents will complete forms for emergency information and permission for their child to receive 1st Aid. Parents must keep the school up-to-date of any changes in phones numbers, allergies, emergency information, and other pertinent information. Forms are available in the office to notify us of these changes.

### **Daily Health Inspections**

Daily Health Inspections are given by staff on duty as each child arrives at school. If the child has any symptoms of illness at that time or during the day, parents will be contacted to take their child home. Should you be contacted about illness by the school we expect to have the child picked up.

### **Minor Injuries, Illnesses & Incidents**

If a child has been slightly injured, has a minor illness symptom or has been involved in an unusual incident the parent will receive a written report describing the nature of the situation from the staff in the parents' mail file.

**Illness Policy**

In order to maintain a healthy environment for your child follow these guidelines: Keep your child home from school if he or she is not well or has any one or more of the following symptoms:

**Fever**--must be fever free & without fever reducing medication for 24 hours.

**Diarrhea or Vomiting**—child must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school

**Runny Nose**--keep your child home when their nose is running uncontrollably. Contact your child's physician if their runny nose becomes chronic or sinuses are painful.

**Rash**--keep your child home if they have an undiagnosed skin rash (inc. blisters, hives, lesions on body or face).

**Nits or Lice**--treat as physician recommends, child may return after treatment and hair is "nit free".

**Serious Injuries & Illnesses**

IN CASE OF SERIOUS INJURY OR ILLNESS WE WILL:

- 1) Assess the child's condition and take immediate 1st Aid measures.
- 2) Make an immediate attempt to contact parents.
- 3) If we cannot contact the parents we will then attempt to contact them through the persons listed on the child's Identification Emergency Information Card. If we cannot contact the parent we will then contact the child's physician.
- 4) If necessary we will call ambulance or paramedics.
- 5) Until the arrival of a parent/guardian, the physician, ambulance or paramedics; a staff member will remain with the child and make decisions on the child's behalf.
- 6) A staff member will remain with the child until the arrival of the parent should the child need to go to a medical facility.

**Health Records**

Prior to enrollment parents must present evidence of up-to-date immunizations and tuberculin clearance or signed affidavit to waiver requirements, plus a pre-admission physician's report signed by the child's doctor stating the child's immunization dates, health status and last exam date.

**Nutrition**

Snacks are planned to meet the child's nutritional requirements as recommended by the Child Care Food Program of the United States Department of Agriculture in proportion to the amount of time the child is in the program each day. The amount of food served is adjusted according to the age of the children. Snack menu plans are posted monthly. Nutritional suggestions for lunches brought from home are available upon request, as lunches from home must also meet USDA guidelines.

**Hand Washing & Toileting**

Children are taught proper hand-washing procedures, by using running water, soap, scrubbing techniques and disposable towels. Children are required to wash before snacks and meals, and after toileting, and before engaging in cooking and water-play. Teachers use supportive strategies for toileting and remind children of best practices for wiping and washing after urination and bowel movements.

**Toilet Learning**

Our program requires that all students be toilet-learned by the time they begin school.

In our program a child is considered toilet learned when they can:

- 1) Wear cloth training pants or underwear during the day.
- 2) Will usually go unassisted or when reminded and have few accidents.
- 3) Can pull down/up own pants and underwear with little assistance.
- 4) Use the toilet unassisted.
- 5) Can wipe self, front to back (but may need supervision after bowel movement).
- 6) Flush and wash by themselves.

### Attire

Children should be dressed comfortably in clothing that permits active play and is sturdy and free of complicated fasteners. Please keep a bag with an extra set of clothes in the child's cubby for accidents. CHILDREN ARE NOT ALLOWED TO WEAR: corded hoods or drawstrings, long necklaces, flip-flop sandals, long dresses or "T" shirts to the ground as they may cause accidents. We strongly encourage self-help style shoes (eg. Velcro-type). Weather permitting, children will be allowed to go barefoot indoors and outdoors.

### Emergency/Disaster Packs

Each child enrolled is required to have an emergency/disaster pack on site for disaster preparedness. These bags will be returned to you at the end of the year to be updated or taken home. The school stores water and other emergency supplies as well. Please check freshness dates on all food and drink items to be sure they will be edible until at least the end of the term.

## **THE RIGHT OF THE LICENSING AGENCY**

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA GENERAL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS, SEC. 101195, states:

"The Dept. of Social Services or Community Care Licensing Agency shall have the authority to interview child(ren) and/or staff, and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent. The licensee shall make provisions for private interview with any child(ren) or any staff member; and for the examination of all records relating to the operation of the facility. The department or licensing agency shall have the authority to observe the physical condition of the child(ren), including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement and to have a licensed medical professional examine the child(ren)."

## **MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES**

### No Toys From Home

Children are not allowed to bring toys to school. Books, recordings and other materials that relate to our themes are welcome, but we do ask that they be left for a few days. Occasionally, the teacher may send a note home for the child to bring a specific item from home to share at group time, if so we ask the item arrive in a bag with the child's name clearly marked on it.

### Birthdays

We observe the child's birthday during small group time with a special crown or medallion and sing "Happy Birthday". In honor of the child's birthday the parent may donate a book to the school to be shared with the child's small group. If the child's birthday falls on a weekend it will be celebrated on the next school day.

### Neighborhood Walks

Occasionally, the teachers will schedule short neighborhood walks. We feel it beneficial for children to learn how to take a walk in a group and observe certain safety rules.

### Extra Clothes

We ask that every child maintain an extra bag of clothes in the cubbie for accidents and messes. This bag should include; 2 pair of underwear, a pair of sweats or shorts, a shirt and a pair of socks. (shoes optional)

## **GUIDANCE METHODS & DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES**

We use positive approaches to help the children develop appropriate pre-school age behavior. These techniques are used to fit the needs of each child and each situation. In most situations we use re-direction, positive comments, and suggest and/or discuss alternatives. These methods help children build self-control and negotiation skills. Teachers help children resolve conflicts with others by using problem solving techniques; by defining the problem, offering alternatives and suggesting outcomes. Should a child become out-of-control the child will be removed from the situation until calm and then allowed to return with the teacher's help so that the child can constructively re-enter play.

If a teacher feels that she cannot affect a change in a problem behavior, the parents will be asked to meet with the teacher and/or director so that as a team a plan can be formulated for referral and or intervention. There are rare occasions where, even when working together, we fail to make positive changes in that child's life. Should any child, after attempted remediation, pose a threat to the well being of another child, children or teacher, the child posing the threat will be dismissed from the program.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATIONS & REFERRALS**

The staff performs ongoing developmental tracking to determine the child's progress. When a family enrolls in our program, we assume the responsibility of assisting parents with referrals in relation to any special needs the child may have regarding his or her adjustment to school or growth and development. Families will be referred for outside professional assessment if we feel that the child is in need special services. We provide a referral list upon request. If after all avenues are exhausted and we find that we cannot meet the child's needs we will refer the child for more appropriate placement.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT**

We encourage all parents to become involved in our program. We want parents to know and understand and discuss with us our goals. Please feel free to offer suggestions, comments and constructive criticisms as well as moral and financial support.

Classroom Volunteers -- Parents may volunteer to add support to the teaching staff. Regularly scheduled slots can be made by arrangement. On-site training, a TB clearance and a signed confidentiality statement are required.

Parent Volunteers -- Volunteer aide is optional and could entail weekly hours or simply making a few phone calls. This area of assistance could include for example organizing and/or participating in various committees, collecting school supplies, phone calling, etc.

Parent Guest Speakers/Visitors -- In our continuing effort to offer a well-rounded experience for the children, we have a Guest Speaker/Visitor program. We encourage every possible opportunity to bring the community into the classroom. If you have a talent or vocation you would like to share with the children, please contact us.

Parent Education Program -- We offer occasional parent nights--some are parenting seminars and others that are about relevant educational practices such as kindergarten readiness and child development. We are also able to set up meetings/seminars on pertinent topics at the request of three or more parents.

Parent Observations -- After being introduced to our program, we would like you to see how our school really works. It is important that parents come into our busy, happy, active and creative school to see their child at play. We want parents to realize the validity of learning through play by seeing what is being learned in our environment. We strongly encourage each parent to come in and visit often.

Parent Information -- The Parents' Information Area is set aside for up-dates regarding parenting classes, seminars, and other family activities. We also have many helpful and informative books in our Parent Library for you to borrow--books and articles on parenting, child care, and child growth and development.

Parent Mail Files -- These files are located in the sign-in area and are used for communication between the school and the parent, and parent to parent as well. Parent Mail Files are to be checked daily.

Newsletters -- Newsletters are published each month to inform parents of upcoming events, articles, announcements and information. Please check them for important dates.

Parent Questionnaire -- At least once during the school term parents will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will ask the parent to evaluate how our program meets the needs of their family. Input from the parents is essential information to us as we use it to evaluate the quality of our program. Many of the questions asked in the questionnaire are related to the high standards that we continually work toward and improve upon.

Parent/Teacher Conferences -- Fall and Spring conferences are offered. Parents will be contacted by their child's teacher to set up a conference time. These conferences are designed to bring parent and teacher together to share and discuss the child's progress, strengths and needs. Conferences are scheduled for 20 minutes per family 2 times/ year. Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any other time as well.

Progress Reports -- Teacher's will complete Progress Reports for each child. These reports are meant to keep the parent informed about how the child is doing between conference times and give them insight to their child's level of pre-academic skills. Copies of the reports will be kept in the child's cumulative file to help the child's present teacher and future teachers understand the child better and to ensure smoother transitions from one term to the next.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

We host several special events each year. Some are traditional, annual events while others are planned with regard to the interests of the children and teachers. We try to have at least one a season. Listed below are our regularly scheduled events.

Harvest Social -- We have an evening costume party for children and their families in October.

Ice Cream Social -- Children and their families are invited to come to school in the evening in January and wear their pajamas for an ice cream party.

Class Tea Parties/Parent Special Visits -- Children prepare a special snack for their parents or invite their parent for a special visit in February.

Open House & Art Show -- Our annual Open House & Art Show is held in April. During this time the children bring their parents to the school on the weekend to celebrate Children's Art. Each child will have a few pieces on display.

Family Picnic & Graduation -- At the close of the school term, a celebration is held for all the children and their families. The children who are "graduating" from the program are honored and perform some of their favorite songs and dances.

## **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

Sept:	Labor Day (1 day)	Feb:	President's Days/Local Ski week (5 days)
Oct:	In-Service (1 day)	Mar:	Teacher In-Service (1 Friday)
Nov:	Veteran's Day (1 day)	Apr:	Spring Break (5-6 days)
	Thanksgiving (3 days)	May:	Memorial Day (1 day)
Dec:	Winter Break (10 days Dec/Jan)	Jun:	Semester Break (1-5 Days)
Jan:	M.L. King, Jr B-day (1 day)	Jul:	Independence Holiday (1 day to 1 week)
		Aug:	Summer Vacation (10-14 days Aug/Sept)

## **PREPARING FOR SCHOOL**

### Child's Visit Day

To help your child become accustomed to our program and facility it is necessary it set up a day or more where your child comes to school with a parent to visit for a couple of hours to participate in the program. Not only do these visits help your child prepare for school, but it helps ensure that each child is placed in a group that matches his or her level of development.

### New Family Orientation Meeting

Parents of new students are expected to attend a parent orientation meeting. We consider this meeting so important that at least one preferably both must attend. To ensure that your child will realize the maximum benefits of our program, it is important to understand our goals, policies, procedures, and educational philosophy. During this meeting parents will be introduced to the entire staff and learn about their areas of expertise. And in particular your child's teacher will discuss the focus of their plans for the school term.

### New Student Orientation Day

Before the beginning of the school term the child will be introduced to his or her teacher and other new class members. There will be a short group time to orient the child with the facility, rules and general guidelines.

### Starting School

Starting school is an exciting experience for a young child and his or her family, however it may also be a difficult one. It is important to introduce the child to school in a way that will make the first separation as easy as possible. We suggest that the parent and child visit often before the child is scheduled to begin school. We also recommend developing a "good-bye routine" to help your child understand what will happen next as you prepare to leave.

On the child's first regular school day it is important to leave your child even though he or she may cry. This usually only lasts until the parent is out of sight. There is also a possibility that a child may separate easily in the beginning and then suffer separation anxiety a few days or weeks later. It is normal for a child to go through a period of adjustment as part of the child's healthy development is learning to accept change and be able to feel comfortable away from home and parents. If this time becomes unusually difficult the staff will be able to help the family with specific strategies designed to help the family adjust more easily.

