

Non Profit Spotlight



TLC Learning Center



In today's world, finding the right childcare and preschool can be a daunting task. With more and more parents working outside the home, this need is increasingly becoming a necessity. For 58 years, TLC Learning Center, formerly Tiny Tim Center, has been providing high-quality preschool, early childhood education, and pediatric therapeutic services to Longmont families. TLC Learning Center has also recently introduced the Infant, Wobbler & Toddler programs in order to provide the same high-quality early learning techniques to even the youngest members of our community.

"We can now take children with or without special needs as young as 6 weeks old," Executive Director, Matt Eldred said. The Infant, Wobblers & Toddler rooms are set up to accommodate children up to 36 months. The Infant room can accommodate up to 10 children from 6 weeks to 18 months, the Wobbler room can take up to 9 children from 12 to 24 months old, and the Toddlers also can enroll up to 9 children from 24 to 36 months. "Every room has some overlap because every child is different," said Infant Nursery Supervisor, Debbie Van Thuyne. "They move from one room to the other based on development, not age."



Since development is such a strong factor in the TLC mission, there are a variety of therapists on site who help in determining and assessing the developmental pace of each child. "You get to know the children very well and know whether they are going to meet a development milestone," Van Thuyne told us. "Everybody works at their own pace, so there are going to be gaps in the milestones, but it's great having the therapists come in every day and to be able to ask, 'I've noticed this about this child, do you think...'" For TLC, having that regular check-in from therapists is a wonderful resource and makes it easier to ensure that each child gets the help he or she needs.

All of the classrooms at TLC are structured to be inclusive, which is another important element of their mission. Each classroom is set up so that about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the children have special needs, $\frac{1}{3}$ are low-income or at-risk children, and $\frac{1}{3}$ are children from typical, full-paying families. "I think families just don't know that TLC is a quality child care center for ALL kids, not just kids with special needs or disabilities or income needs," Matt Eldred told us.

Regardless of which category you may be in, the process of enrolling is the same for all families who wish to have their child attend TLC Learning Center. They schedule weekly tours where families are invited to visit the school. The tours are guided by both the Director of Educational Services and the Director of Therapeutic Services. Because they get to experience all of the childcare, educational, and therapy services through these tours, families are able to see the entire spectrum of services that TLC offers the very first time they come in the door. The tour includes exploring the whole building, and specifically the room their child will be spending her time. Families get a chance to see how the classroom works, what the setup looks like, and get a general sense of what happens during a typical day.

Next, the family fills out a registration form. Registration helps the staff know what you need as a family. "We find out what specific days they are needing and it also tells us other things particular to their child's needs, such as dietary restrictions or allergies," said Eldred. "Those are all really good things to know up front, so we can properly place the child in the right room." Another process in determining which classroom they will be placed in is looking at kindergarten



and working backwards. “We try to place them in a room that is age and developmentally appropriate so that they will be able to stay with that same group of kids for up to 4 years until they eventually go off to kindergarten.”

Once they determine the enrollment process and the classroom placement, TLC will have the child come spend some time in the classroom, basically like a play date. Additionally, the teachers go on a home visit to see what the child’s home looks like and to learn more about the child’s daily life. The goal is to

learn how they can make the child feel more comfortable based on what they know from home. Families will often share certain things about the child like his favorite bedtime toy, favorite story, or favorite food. Whatever is important to the family in their home environment, the teachers want to know so they can incorporate that into their classroom. This is something they do for every child.

While TLC is well known for working with children who have special needs or are at risk or from low income families, not everyone is aware that they also welcome other children as well, which supports their mission of creating balanced classrooms. “Our biggest challenge right now,” Matt Eldred told us, “is letting typical families know that if you are looking for childcare for working families, kindergarten readiness, quality preschool, TLC has that!”

TLC Learning Center is not a place for just special needs or low income families, they are a place for all families. If you have been looking for a unique and inclusive preschool or childcare, TLC currently has openings. You can find out more information at www.learningwithtlc.org.



TLC Learning Center

“Promoting Diversity, Empathy, Respect and Friendship
for Kids of All Needs and Walks of Life”

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www.learningwithtlc.org



Providing high-quality preschool, early childhood education and pediatric therapeutic services to Longmont families.

611 Korte Parkway
Longmont, CO 80501