

Playground Rules

 * 2's and 3's stay in the 3's yard. 4's stay in the 4's yard.

 * Wear shoes outside. Dress up shoes stay inside.

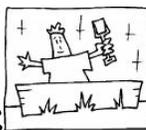
 * Fill water buckets from the PreSchool Family sand faucets. Bathroom sinks are for washing hands only. Drinking fountains are for drinking only.

 * When you're riding a car or tricycle, stop or go around. When you're a passenger, hang on tight.

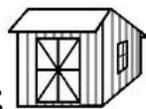
 * When you're pulling a wagon, walk. When you're a passenger, sit down and hold on tight.

 * Climb on the fire truck, green structure, or monkey bars.

* Slide down feet first on the slides.

 * Sand stays in the sandbox. Rice, beans, and cornmeal stay in the bins.

 * Sticks are for building, drawing, decorating, and collecting.

 * Adults only in the sheds.

Playground Rules

Philosophy

Outdoor play is vital for healthy development in children and adults. Expansive outdoor play allows children to be creative, take risks, and have fun. While they experiment with physics and chemistry, they are also learning about their growing bodies and developing strong large and small motor skills. As adults, we must balance these important developmental tasks against the risks for accidents that exist for all children. For this reason, we have developed a set of rules for all children on the playground at PreSchool Family.

Teaching and Explaining Rules

We understand that you may have different rules for your child(ren). We, too, have enforced different rules for our own children in different places and contexts. The rules we have selected are based on our experiences in supervising groups of children at the PreSchool Family facility. Three-year-olds are capable of learning that there are different expectations for different places. And they also benefit from consistency within a specific context. Please help your child learn the PreSchool Family rules by **enforcing them even when class is not in session**. You can explain that these are the rules at PreSchool Family but at home or in the park you have different rules.

When There Isn't a Rule

We have tried to keep our list of rules to a minimum and of course our creative children will develop new ways of playing that are not safe. If you are in doubt about an activity or game, ask yourself:

- *Is the child learning?
- *Is the activity safe?
- *Is the activity friendly?

If the answers to these questions are negative, then you will need to intervene by redirecting or by stopping the activity. Children will not always be happy with our decisions. Their safety is our primary responsibility.

Keeping Children Safe

Your most important task is to monitor all play areas constantly. You must be close enough to children in the play yard to redirect or stop dangerous activities immediately. If your hands can't reach the children, your words will not either. When you are on the play yard, move to where the children are. Be aware of the other adults on the play yard and choose a location that increases coverage. Always keep your eyes on the children, even if you are talking to another adult. Save lengthy or detailed conversations for a time when you are not supervising children.

Notes About Specific Rules

In defining rules for children we have tried to phrase limits positively and in a way that children can remember. Here are some extra notes and explanations to help you enforce these rules.

3's stay in the 3's yard. Although our time on the play yards does overlap, there are times when 3's classes are outside while 4's classes are inside. During those times, there are no adults available to supervise the 4's yard. In addition, adults in the 4's yard do not know 3's students and will not include them in attendance counts. 3's children must stay in the 3's yard where they are visible to 3's teachers and parents.

Wear shoes outside. Dress up shoes stay inside. We love being barefoot and we know children do too. Unfortunately, our very public play yard is not safe for barefoot play. Children can be barefoot inside. Please help by having your children wear shoes that are comfortable for running, climbing, and jumping. The shoes from the dress up areas have slippery soles and are sometimes difficult to balance in. For that reason, they are unsafe to wear outside.

Fill water buckets from the PreSchool Family sand faucets. Water play teaches many valuable lessons. And water when spilled on the bathroom floor, red top, and black top can be slippery. In addition, sand from sand toys damages the plumbing both in the bathroom and at the water fountains. When it is warm enough for water play, we will put our extra fancy PreSchool Family faucet structure in the sand. Please do not let children fill buckets at the bathroom sinks or the water fountains.

When you're riding a car or tricycle, stop or go around. When you're a passenger, hang on tight. When children crash tricycles into fences, curbs, or structures, they damage the tricycles. They also can bounce off of the tricycles and fall onto the blacktop. Crashing vehicles is never acceptable. Teach children to stop before touching anything else, or to go around an obstacle.

Children enjoy riding on the backs of the fire engine tricycles and sometimes a passenger can push and help a struggling tricyclist get started. Passengers need to hang on tight so they are prepared for sudden starts and stops.

When you're pulling a wagon, walk. When you're a passenger, sit down and hold on tight. Moving passengers and cargo in the wagons leads to wonderful pretend play scenarios. However, wagons tip easily. When children walk while they are pulling wagons, they turn slowly enough that wagons don't tip.

Climb on the fire truck, green structure, or monkey bars. Tables, counters, chairs, and playhouses are not designed for climbing. Please do not put children on top of tables or countertops. Teach children that chairs are for sitting on. (Sometimes, adults need to remember this lesson too!) We can help children learn to climb safely by letting them climb unassisted while we spot.

Lifting a child higher than s/he can climb alone deprives her/him of a learning opportunity and potentially puts the child at greater risk of falling.

We would love to have a wonderful tree for climbing. Unfortunately, none of the trees in the PreSchool Family yard have adequate crash zones around them for safe climbing. The trees behind the shed are surrounded by packed dirt. While the tree in the playhouse area has sand underneath, the sand is surrounded by concrete berms within the six-foot crash zone. For those reasons, children cannot climb on any of the trees in the 3's yard. The playhouses in this area are not designed for climbing and also do not have adequate crash zones around them.

Slide down feet first on the slides. Children can slide on their bottoms or on their bellies as long as their feet hit the ground first. Groups of children who want to climb up and slide down the slide at the same time will need support with conflict negotiation and traffic control. When adults slide with children, the higher mass of the adult puts the child at greater risk for injury; for this reason, only children are allowed on the slides at PreSchool Family.

Sand stays in the sandbox. Rice, beans, and cornmeal stay in the bins. Sand, rice, beans, and cornmeal are dangerous and slippery on the blacktop and red top. If children want to fill car trunks with sand, the car can be put into the sandbox. **Adults and children share responsibility for sweeping up spilled sand.**

Sticks are for building, drawing, decorating, and collecting. Sticks make wonderful toys. We want to support children who are using sticks to draw in the sand, decorate sand castles, or build structures. Children can also admire the beauty and shapes of the sticks that fall in our yard. However, sticks, along with other sand toys, can also be used as weapons. Stick play must be supervised carefully so it can be redirected if sticks are used in a dangerous fashion. Fighting each other with sticks (or with any of the sand toys) is never acceptable.

Adults only in the sheds. We have several playhouses for children who are enjoying play in enclosed spaces. Children must wait for adults to retrieve items from both the vehicle shed and the purple shed.