



LANGUAGE & LITERACY ENRICHMENT CENTER  
FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

## OUR PHILOSOPHY:

The mission of the Tutela Language and Literacy Center is to provide high quality, evidence-based early childhood care to families to improve early childhood development outcomes through a focus on language, literacy, and parent engagement.

### Process Driven Development:

We seek to help students built their own system of iterative, continual, complete, and consistent progress that grows with them. Teaching processes encourages a growth mindset, not the fixed “learn and dump” of a hit milestone and move on approach. This applies to not only the students but to teachers and this very document as well.



### Tenets:

- **Independence:**  
Freedom to fail, practice, and repeat until mastery solidifies learning and builds resilience, problem-solving skills, and self-efficacy. We all need this opportunity to explore and determine interests. Adults are guides and models for the children and not there to dictate each individual action and decision.
- **Critical Thinking:**  
Critical thinking skills are learned through play and everyday routines. Pausing and allowing time and space is fundamental for language and literacy development. Without critical thinking the child won't be able to build upon and combine fundamentals on their own.
- **Language & Literacy:**  
Language is cognition. There is no literacy without language.  
A strong language foundation allows greater and more complete context and access to the content of their world.
- **Parent Engagement**  
Learning doesn't only happen during business hours; we seek out and hope to partner with parents who see the value in a unified front and want to learn and grow alongside their child. Without the support and engagement of guardians at home we will be limited in the impact we can achieve.

### Why do these tenets matter?

These are critical first mover skills, you cannot skip them. The earlier and more concrete we can develop these skills and strengthen their connections to each other the better we set children up for success later in life. We do this not just to teach here and now but to **create a greater capacity and system for learning.**

Someone who never starts this process will have a much harder life than those who do. One who starts later is at a stark disadvantage to those who begin right away. And in real life scenarios the difficulty of starting late and being seen or seeing oneself as 'behind' or 'not as smart' makes starting late not just difficult but unlikely.

In order to achieve all their potential, students must start early and create processes that they can use for the rest of their life. **How do we use the Environment to achieve this?**

- 1. Language Modeling and Interaction:** Being founded by a Speech Language Pathologist, our teachers are trained to serve as models for rich language use, engaging in frequent conversations, asking open-ended questions, and providing descriptive feedback. This intentional language modeling fosters language development, expands vocabulary, and promotes communication skills. Additionally, we can provide speech therapy directly if necessary.
- 2. Literature and Storytelling:** We prioritize regular reading sessions, both individually and in groups, where children are exposed to a wide range of age-appropriate literature. Storytelling and shared reading experiences stimulate imagination, build listening skills, and develop a love for books and storytelling. **We follow 'The Science of Reading' framework for literacy development.**
- 3. Print-Rich Environment:** Our environment is filled with a variety of print materials, books, labels, signs, and meaningful print displays. This setting helps immerse children in a language-rich atmosphere, exposing them to vocabulary, language structures, and literacy concepts from an early age.



- 4. Multisensory Learning:** We incorporate multisensory experiences to engage children's senses and enhance their learning. Through hands-on activities & sensory materials we provide opportunities for children to explore, manipulate, and interact with objects and materials in meaningful ways.
- 5. Play-Based Learning:** Play is at the core of our learning approach, as it promotes exploration, creativity, problem-solving, and social-emotional development. Our environment offers open-ended materials, imaginative play areas, and structured play opportunities to encourage active engagement and hands-on learning.
- 6. Individualized Instruction:** We recognize the unique developmental pathways of each student. Our environment supports individualized instruction and differentiated learning experiences, allowing children to progress at their own pace and explore their interests and strengths.
- 7. Zero Tolerance for Screens:** We do not allow screen usage by the teachers or students. The evidence as to their harm to cognitive, social interaction, language, and attention development is overwhelming. The ubiquity of screens in our modern life is such that there is no reason whatsoever to provide additional exposure to them.

- 8. We implement the HighScope Curriculum** as a flexible framework for our days. **HighScope** is a nationally accredited curriculum that focuses on play-based and active learning through effective engagement with the adult and the classroom environment. It aligns with the Colorado State Academic Standards for Early Childhood learning.

### Why 2–6-Year-olds?

Having students of varying ages between 2 and 6 in the same learning environment offers numerous benefits for their overall development.

- 1. Peer Learning and Social Interaction:** A mixed-age setting allows for natural peer learning opportunities, where older students can mentor and assist younger ones. Younger students benefit from observing and learning from their older peers, This dynamic fosters social interaction, empathy, collaboration, and the development of valuable social skills.
- 2. Enhanced Emotional and Social Development:** Interacting with peers of different ages helps children develop empathy, understanding, and respect for others. They learn to navigate relationships, resolve conflicts, and appreciate diversity, promoting emotional intelligence and social competence.
- 3. Language and Communication Skills:** In a mixed-age environment, children are exposed to a broader range of language abilities, vocabulary, and communication styles. This diverse linguistic environment supports language development and communication skills for all age groups.
- 4. Self-Regulation and Leadership Skills:** Some students will assume leadership roles and become positive role models in a mixed-age setting. They develop self-regulation, responsibility, and leadership skills as they assist others, fostering a sense of confidence, competence, and independence.
- 5. Cognitive Stimulation and Learning Opportunities:** Being in a multi-age environment exposes children to a wide range of stages, abilities, interests, and learning styles. This is more stimulating and provides a greater variety of opportunities to learn.
- 6. Long-Term Learning and Growth:** A mixed-age setting provides an **extended period** for children to remain in the same learning environment. This continuity allows for long-term relationships with caregivers and peers.

In summary, a mixed age setting promotes peer learning, social interaction, emotional development, language skills, self-regulation, cognitive stimulation, and long-term learning. It also capitalizes on the science of reading, which emphasizes the importance of early language exposure, multisensory experiences, meaningful interactions, and play-based learning. This environment sets the stage for optimal language and literacy development, building a strong foundation that equips children with the necessary skills and enthusiasm for lifelong learning and success.



## SCHEDULES AND POLICIES

Tutela Institute Reserves the right to make changes and updates to it's policies.

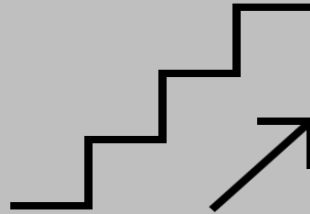
1. **Schedule:** 7:30 am to 5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

**Why Four Days a Week?** Teaching a room full of young students is hard work. Both for them and the teacher. Four days allows one extra day to recover, prepare and spend time with family. Both for students and staff. This improves the quality and longevity of the program and staff and helps balance work & home life.

We follow Weld RE-4 Schedule of Holidays and Weather Days such as Snow days. If school is canceled, expect us to have to cancel as well (Excluding summer, we are a 12-month program)

The typical daily schedule is: (Weather Permitting as much time as possible is spent outside)

- Dropoff 7:30-8:30
- Morning Snack: 9:00 am
- Deep Work: 9:30-12:30 am
- Lunch 12:30
- Quiet/Nap Time: 1:00-2:30pm
- Unstructured Playtime: 2:30pm
- Afternoon Snack: 3:30pm
- Pickup: 4-5pm



We follow a flexible routine not a rigid schedule. Our goal is achieving a session of 'deep work' every day that focuses on one single tenet. Our 'Daily Developmental Activity'. It's about small consistent steps forward, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. That's how great progress is built.

2. **Payment and Financial Policies:**

Our Fee is \$350/Week to be paid weekly and Payment is through the Brightwheel Application. Automatic Payment is Strongly Recommended. We don't charge late fees however after two late payments setup of Automatic Payment will be required. A third late payment will be cause of review and possible disenrollment.

If you have an issue with payment, please be respectful and proactive and communicate with us BEFORE the late payment. We will try our best to work with individuals and be as understanding as we can.

3. **Enrollment**

All Children ages 24 months to 6 years are welcome to enroll. Each family and student are reviewed individually. Please reach out to us and set up an in-person meeting so you can meet our staff and facility. Each student upon enrollment will be given an assessment of their current

language and cognitive development. A benefit of having a hands-on founder who is a licensed speech therapist. Individualized plans will be developed based on this assessment and shared with new parents.

Enrollment requires a copy of the student's immunization record, setup of Brightwheel account and a signed copy of this guidebook by each guardian prior to their first day.

#### **4. Disenrollment**

If you decide to leave Tutela we understand and as for at least a three-week notice. If we must ask you to leave we will also provide three week notice. If safety is a concern, we may require an immediate stop to attendance. Enrollment and disenrollment is the at the sole discretion of Tutela Institute.

#### **5. Communication:**

All communication will be through the Brightwheel app. Unless you specifically ask us not to, we will provide occasional updates that include photos through the app. We will strive to give daily updates on each student, but this is not always possible. It's important that both teacher and parent are responsive to messages. However, because our teacher also observes a near zero screen policy, we know that during class hours, they will not be able to respond immediately. (

#### **6. Safety Policies:**

As a state licensed program our facility and teacher have been carefully set up and trained to provide a safe environment. Children are supervised 100% of the time and we practice periodic emergency preparedness plans. We also encourage parents to review and inspect our facility for any safety concerns they may have.

#### **7. Health and Hygiene:**

We follow the state of Colorado guidelines for individual and facility cleanliness. This includes regular hand washing and sterilizing of facility and toys.

#### **8. Behavior Management:**

We use a 'natural consequence' approach to behavior management. We allow students to learn through related, logical, and educational consequences. Violence towards other students is not tolerated and students who can't abide this basic rule may be asked to leave the program.

#### **9. Nutrition and Meals:**

We provide meals and snacks for the group and barring a special dietary restriction don't individualize the meals for each student. It's important the students understand this and help create a pleasant dining environment, promoting healthy eating habits and encouraging social interaction during mealtimes. We encourage student's help during snack and meal prep as able and appropriate as it's proved to encourage both independence skills and healthy eating habits.

## **10. Safety Policies:**

As a state licensed program our facility and teacher have been carefully set up and trained to provide a safe environment. Children are supervised 100% of the time and we practice regular emergency preparedness plans. We also encourage parents to review and inspect our facility for any safety concerns they may have.

Materials and furnishings will be checked regularly for safety concerns. We will be kept up to date on safety recalls for toys and materials in order to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Any recalled or damaged materials will be immediately removed from the environment.

## **11. Health and Hygiene:**

We follow the state of Colorado guidelines for individual and facility cleanliness. This includes regular hand washing and sterilizing of facility and toys.

For your own child's comfort and protection, plus consideration for the other children and staff, please keep your child home when he/she is not feeling well. Please call to let us know your child will be absent, we will follow up as needed. If your child becomes ill at home, they need to be fever, diarrhea, and vomit free for 24 hours without medication in order to attend school.

## **12. Behavior Management**

We use a 'natural consequence' approach to behavior management. We allow students to learn through related, logical, and educational consequences; along with using redirection and environmental set-up to de-escalate challenging behaviors before they become an issue. Children will be worked with on an individual basis, and treated with respect. Violence toward students by staff or other students will not be tolerated.

Every effort will be made to work with each child and family if there are concerns that would lead to expulsion. If behavior concerns out of the norm of age appropriate behavior continues after regular attempts for guidance by the provider, observation and documentation of the concerns will be made by the provider and brought to the parents in an attempt to resolve any ongoing issues. A child may be asked to have a "break period" or "suspension" for up to a week if the behaviors continue and the provider deems necessary. A free Early Childhood Mental Health consultation may be requested from North Range Behavioral Health if deemed necessary. We reserve the right to move to expulsion if there are safety concerns for the staff or other students that cannot be resolved through these steps.

## **13. Nutrition and Meals:**

We provide meals and snacks for the group and barring a special dietary restriction don't individualize the meals for each student. It's important the students understand this and help create a pleasant dining environment, promoting healthy eating habits and encouraging social interaction during mealtimes. We encourage student's help during snack and meal prep as able and appropriate as it's proved to encourage both independence skills and healthy eating habits. We follow the nutritional guidelines set forth in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus will be posted in the facility and sent home ahead of time each month.

**14. Parental Involvement:**

We encourage parental involvement and engagement in their child's learning experience. As part of your enrollment, all families will be provided with access to Tutela Institute's online library of caregiver training materials. There will also be opportunities for parent participation in special events, volunteering, and we will provide parent coaching and training on our methods and practices from time to time.

**15. Record-Keeping:**

It's important we maintain accurate records of attendance, emergency contact information, medical records, consent forms, and any incident or accident reports as required by state regulations which is why we will do nearly all communication through one app and if there are any changes to your information such as addresses it's forwarded immediately.

We make every effort to ensure confidentiality and privacy of all sensitive information in compliance with applicable privacy laws.

**16. Professional Development:**

We are committed to ongoing professional development to stay informed about best practices in early childhood education, child development, and safety guidelines. And to carefully review and incorporate the strongest evidence-based information and practices into the Tutela curriculum.

**17. Drop off/Pick Up Procedures:**

There is no transportation provided by the Tutela Institute. Each parent is responsible for transporting his or her child to and from preschool. An adult must accompany each child into the classroom and sign their child in and out each day in attendance via the Brightwheel App. Pick-up authorization for anyone other than the child's parents is preferred to be in writing, but may be done verbally in an emergency situation. Please be sure the preschool is always provided with an up-to-date list of people permitted to pick up your child. We are required to ask for a photo ID before the child is released to them.

**18. Arrival/Pick Up during non-designated hours:**

Please do your best to be respectful of the time of our staff and have your child picked up by the end of scheduled care hours each day, and dropped off no earlier than the beginning of scheduled care hours. If an emergency arises and pick up needs to be later than scheduled hours please let our staff know as soon as possible.

If a child remains at the center after designated business hours without prior notice every attempt will be made to contact their parents and all other authorized pickups. If no contact is able to be made to anyone on the child's list and they still remain after 1 hour the Windsor Police Department will be contacted. A staff member will remain with the child until a parent/guardian, designated pickup, or police officer collects the child. Children who need emergency care after hours will be given an activity and snack if needed until an authorized pick up arrives.

**19. Non-Authorized Pick Up Attempts/Pick Up Attempts Made Under the Influence:**



If someone attempts to pick up your child and they are not authorized, 911 will be called. A parent has the right to pick up their child whether they are listed on the enrollment form or not unless court orders do not allow this. I will need court orders on file. If you or any other person attempts to pick up your child and appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, I will encourage you to let me call someone to come get you and your child. If you leave with your child, I will call 911 and report you.

**20. Special Activities Outside of the Center:**

If special activities/field trips are planned outside the center, parents/guardians will be responsible to cover any admission fees in order for their child to attend. If you do not want your child to attend the activity, you will need to make alternative care arrangements for the day. Notification of any special field trips will be given with ample advance notice.

**21. Non-Discriminatory Policy/Americans with Disabilities Act**

The Tutela Institute admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the preschool. It does not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, or national origin. The Tutela Institute is following the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will do our best to accommodate those with special needs. The final decision of services offered will be made by the staff and administration at Tutela, and by the parents of the child. Decisions will be made with the best interest of the child in mind.

**22. Non-Immunized Children:**

Children enrolled at the Tutela Institute must have an immunization record on file before they attend, or a signed exemption form for medical or religious exemptions.

**23. Substitute Care:**

Every attempt will be made to have substitute care available during provider family emergencies. For emergencies that require the provider to leave unexpectedly, Collin Raaz will provide emergency substitute care. Parents will be notified as soon as possible of the need for substitute care and care provider being used. If an emergency care provider does not meet licensing training standards parents will have 1 hour to pick up their child from the facility.

All regularly scheduled substitute providers will meet licensing standards for education and training. Planned breaks in the Tutela schedule will be made known at enrollment and updated yearly.

**24. Appropriate Clothing and Equipment**

Children at our facility will be outdoors daily, weather permitting, and be allowed to engage fully in outdoor and sensory play. Please send your child to school in clothing appropriate for weather and full days of play. During art or sensory play times that are likely to be messy children will be provided with a smock to mitigate as much of the mess as possible.

**25. Loss/Damage of Personal Belongings**

Each child will be given a cubby to store their personal belongings and leave a spare set of clothing. It is highly recommended to not bring toys or cherished items to the facility unless a special event is happening where that would be appropriate. Accidents are bound to happen, but if a child intentionally causes damage to the property or personal belongings at the center or of another child, their parents/guardians will be held responsible.

## **26. Scheduled/Unscheduled Trips**

The school will take regularly scheduled trips to local parks, libraries, and walks around the neighborhood. Parents will need to sign a release form in order for their child to participate. Parents will always be notified when children will be taking a scheduled trip away from the facility. No unscheduled trips will occur.

## **27. Rest Time and Equipment**

All children will participate in rest time after lunch. Children will be asked to rest quietly on their nap cots in a calm and peaceful environment for 30 minutes. Children will be allowed to bring books to their cot to rest with. Children who are not asleep after 30 minutes will be allowed to participate in planned quiet activities such as puzzles, books, or coloring.

Parents must provide their child with a light blanket for nap time, brought and stored in a bag (no grocery bags) labeled with the child's first and last name. Tutela will provide an appropriate rest cot and a clean sheet for each child. A small stuffed animal and small pillow may also be brought. Children's personal bedding will be sent home weekly to be laundered. Nap cots will be cleaned daily by staff and never shared between children.

## **28. Diapering and Toilet Learning**

Children are not required to be fully potty trained to attend Tutela. As each child learns at their own pace we are happy to follow each family's lead in their child's toilet learning journey. We do ask that children actively potty training be sent with multiple changes of clothes.

Children still in diapers at their time of enrollment will be changed at regular intervals throughout the day. Diapers must be provided by parents, along with any wipes or creams needed. Diaper creams and wipes must be labeled with the child's first and last name. All diapering materials will be kept in a child's individual cubby space, safely out of reach of all children.

## **29. Daily Outside Play**

All children will play outside daily, weather permitting. The amount of time will depend on the weather and day. We will follow all safety guidelines in regards to unsafe weather for outdoor play and will plan indoor gross motor activities when needed. Please do your best to send your child in weather appropriate gear.

## **30. Sunscreen**

Parents/Guardians must provide sunscreen for their child, labeled with their first and last name. Cream/lotion based only, please. Written authorization is needed before application. In the summer months/nicer weather please apply sunscreen to your child prior to drop off as well, we will reapply based on activity and manufacturers recommendations.

### **31. Secondhand Smoke**

Children will never be exposed to secondhand smoke at our facility. Smoking or tobacco or other recreation drug use on facility property will not be tolerated.

### **32. Illness or Injury at Tutela**

In the event that your child becomes ill while at Tutela and is unable to remain in our care, you will be notified immediately and expected to arrange pickup within one hour. Ill children are children with fevers, vomiting, diarrhea, or any symptoms that restrict them from participating in the daily activities. Your child will be kept in a separate space to rest apart from the group while still being supervised by the provider. If your child is injured and requires medical attention you will be notified immediately. Small injuries (bumps, bruises, scrapes) will be notified at pickup.

### **33. Medication**

If your child requires medication while at our facility, you and the health care provider will need to complete the required forms. The medication will need to be in its original container and delivered directly to the teacher. It will be stored locked and inaccessible to children.

### **34. Emergency Response Procedures**

In the event we have an emergency that requires evacuation an emergency kit that includes each child's emergency contact information has been prepared. We will evacuate to 116 Hemlock Drive. If that location is not safe the backup location is the Windsor-Severance Library at 720 3rd St, Windsor, CO 80550.

For emergencies that require shelter in place we will take our emergency kit to the appropriate in-facility location.

Parents/Guardians will be notified as soon as possible if any emergency situations occur.

For more information on our emergency response procedures, you may request a copy of our Emergency Preparedness Plan to review.

### **35. Reporting of Child Abuse**

Suspected or known child abuse should be reported to: 1-844-264-5437 (Colorado's Toll Free Line to report all suspected or known child abuse). All Tutela staff are trained **mandated reporters** and will immediately report all suspected or known child abuse.

### **36. Licensing Complaint**

Complaints about a Family Child Care Home can be made to Division of Early Care and Learning at 303-866-3755 or 1-800-799-5876. 1575 Sherman St., Denver CO 80203. Rules regarding family child care homes can be found at the Division of Early Care and Learning or [www.cdhs.state.so.us/childcare](http://www.cdhs.state.so.us/childcare) or <http://www.sos.state.co.us/CRR>

## STAFF BIO'S

### **Lead Teacher: Katrina Washer**

Katrina is a mother to three young boys and a licensed teacher and certification for ages birth 8. In 2013 she graduated from Martin Luther College with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. With a passion for lifelong learning, Katrina is delighted to guide the educational journey of the children at the Tutela Institute.



### **Founder: Caitlin Raaz, PhD, CCC-SLP**

Professor of speech language pathology at the University of Northern Colorado, Dr. Raaz obtained her undergraduate degree from the University of Washington and masters and PhD from Arizona State University. With over 15 years of clinical experience, she has treated hundreds of children and developed her own parent training programs and brings that expertise to our program by developing individual language plans and goals for our students.



## Parent Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Parent Handbook provided by the Tutela Institute. I understand and agree to comply with the policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in the handbook.

I will actively participate in my child's educational journey, communicate openly with the caregivers, and stay informed of any updates or revisions to the handbook.

The signees here represent those parents and caregivers approved for drop off and pickup of \_\_\_\_\_ [Student Name]

Parent/Guardian Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_