PHOENIX-TALENT SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE for EVERYONE

PTS Rising Early Learning Center
FAMILY HANDBOOK

Welcome to PTS Rising Early Learning Center

At PTS Rising Early Learning Center, our goal is to provide a safe, welcoming space where every child can grow and thrive. We believe children learn best through play and hands-on experiences, guided by caring adults who understand their needs. Our staff help children grow socially, emotionally, and intellectually in ways that support their natural curiosity.

We focus on building strong relationships with children and families. Our team of trained educators creates fun and engaging learning experiences, helping children gain skills that prepare them for school and life. We value each child's unique abilities and encourage them to express themselves, solve problems, and work well with others.

Our Commitment to Inclusion

All children belong at PTS Rising. Our program welcomes children of all abilities, backgrounds, cultures, and family types. Every child is respected and supported, and our classrooms reflect our belief in equity and fairness.

We partner with families and early childhood special education providers to make sure each child receives the support they need. Children who qualify for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are fully included in all classroom activities. Our staff create learning plans that match each child's needs and celebrate each child's strengths.

We use positive behavior strategies, calm communication, and teamwork to help children feel safe and successful. Teachers receive training in restorative practices and individual behavior supports. If a child has behavior challenges, we work closely with families to create support plans.

When needed, we also connect families with mental health services, early intervention programs, and other community support. Our goal is to ensure every child thrives in our learning community.

We believe in:

- Providing fair opportunities for all children to learn and grow
- Helping children build strong relationships and emotional skills
- Partnering with families and specialists to meet each child's needs

By creating an inclusive and supportive environment, PTS Rising helps every child feel valued,

connected, and ready to learn.

What We Do Every Day

Each day at PTS Rising is filled with opportunities for children to explore, discover, and build confidence. Our teachers use fun, age-appropriate lessons that support learning in all areas of development. These include language, math, science, creativity, movement, and social-emotional skills.

Children learn by doing. Whether they're building with blocks, painting, pretending to be doctors or chefs, or talking with friends, they are developing important life skills. We help children:

- Express themselves in healthy ways
- Make their own choices
- Solve problems and take responsibility
- Grow independent thinking and creativity

Our staff use warm, respectful communication to guide children through the day. We listen to their ideas, ask open-ended questions, and help them make sense of the world around them. Learning happens both indoors and outdoors, and our classrooms are designed to support exploration and play.

Our program follows the Oregon Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines and uses the Invitations to Explore curriculum. This curriculum includes fun, hands-on activities and a strong focus on social-emotional learning. We also use the Second Step program to help children learn about emotions, friendships, and solving problems together.

About Our Program

Our preschool is for children who are 3 or 4 years old by September 1st. We offer a free preschool experience through Oregon's Preschool Promise program.

At this time, we do not offer before or after school care. It's important that families plan for timely drop-off and pick-up.

We believe in equity and inclusivity in everything we do. That belief shows up in our classroom routines, activities, and family communication. Our staff participate in ongoing training and use our resources wisely to support every child's success.

Our teachers are highly qualified and trained through the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC). We work as a team with each child's family and any support providers. By planning together, we meet the individual needs of children and make sure everyone is included. Our care is shaped by what we know about how children grow and learn best.

The Early Learning Center building is a locked facility. We greet families at drop-off and pick-up. For other times, please call ahead or schedule an appointment. Visitors must be buzzed in.

Enrollment Process

Families begin enrollment by applying for Preschool Promise through the Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub. After placement, we will reach out to begin enrollment at PTS Rising. Our staff is available to help walk you through any part of the process.

Orientation Conference

All families will schedule a meeting with our team before school starts. At this intake and orientation conference, we'll learn about your child's interests, strengths, and needs. We'll also answer questions and explain daily routines. We are happy to schedule a time that works for your family.

Program Hours

PTS Rising Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday according to the Phoenix-Talent School District calendar. Please see the school year calendar for important dates.

- **Program Hours:** 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- **Drop-off:** 8:00 – 8:15 AM
- **Pick-up:** 2:00 PM

We are not able to provide transportation at this time. Families must plan for timely drop-off and pick-up each day. If we cannot reach anyone within 30 minutes after dismissal time, we are required to contact community support services to ensure your child's safety. We always try to avoid this and will work with you to find solutions.

School Closures

- **Holidays and Breaks:** We are closed on Federal Holidays and follow the Phoenix-Talent School District schedule for summer, winter, and spring breaks.
- **Weather Closures:** If there is dangerous weather, the ELC Director will decide on closures or delays. These decisions are based on local weather and school district guidance. We will send any alerts to the phone number you provide on your enrollment form.

Attendance

Absences: If your child will be absent due to illness or another reason, please notify the office using SchoolStatus Connect. We track symptoms to protect other children and staff. Preschool Promise families will be disenrolled after 15 days of consecutive absences.

Communication

At PTS Rising, we use SchoolStatus Connect as our main communication tool. Through SchoolStatus Connect, families can:

- Receive classroom newsletters with updates about what children are learning
- View photos and highlights from your child's day
- Get reminders about events, schedule changes, and important announcements

- Communicate directly with your child's teacher

Teachers use SchoolStatus Connect to share meaningful moments from the classroom and keep families connected to their child's learning. We encourage families to check messages regularly and reach out with any questions or updates about their child.

The Early Learning Center has a phone line at 541-897-5210 where messages can be left; this line is not monitored during school hours.

Early Learning Center Staff

Our team includes caring, experienced early childhood educators who are passionate about working with young children. We maintain the appropriate child-to-staff ratio and often have additional educators in classrooms to support learning and specialized services. Questions about staff can be directed to our Early Learning Director at aaron.santi@phoenix.k12.or.us or 541-897-5107.

Family Engagement

We value family partnerships and invite you to take part in your child's learning. Throughout the year, we host family events, activities, and opportunities for you to share ideas or volunteer. If you'd like to volunteer in the classroom, you'll need to complete a volunteer packet and follow school district rules.

Volunteer Packet - English
Volunteer Packet - Spanish

Family conferences are held three times a year. You can also ask for additional meetings anytime. These are great chances to talk about your child's progress, goals, and needs.

Daily Routine and Classroom Practices

Our daily schedule includes activities that help children build routines, feel safe, and enjoy learning. Children will take part in:

- Morning greetings and circle time
- Meals and snacks with friends
- Hands-on activities and free play
- Outdoor learning and large motor play
- Group projects, stories, and quiet time

Cultivating Curious Learners

At PTS Rising, we believe children are naturally curious and learn best through play and hands-on experiences. Our classrooms are designed to encourage children to explore, ask questions, and try new things.

We support curious learners by:

- Encouraging children to explore materials and ideas in their own way
- Asking open-ended questions like “What do you think will happen?”
- Giving children time to experiment, problem-solve, and discover
- Celebrating effort, creativity, and persistence

Learning may look like building, pretending, painting, digging, mixing, or exploring outdoors. All of these experiences help children grow and learn.

Learning Can Get Messy!

Hands-on learning sometimes means children will get messy—and that’s okay! Activities like painting, sensory play, outdoor exploration, and cooking are important parts of learning.

To help your child stay comfortable, please:

- Dress your child in clothes that can get messy
- Provide an extra set of clothing (including socks and underwear) in your child’s backpack
- Check and replace extra clothes as the seasons change

Messy play helps children build creativity, confidence, and problem-solving skills.

Items From Home

Children should also bring:

- Weather-appropriate gear
- Stuffed animals or blankets for rest time are welcome.

We do not allow toys, candy, or money from home.

For birthdays, we celebrate in the classroom without food treats from home. Non-food items like stickers or small toys are okay if there’s one for every classmate. Invitations for outside parties may be placed at the sign-in table if all classmates are invited.

Immunizations

Oregon law requires all children to be up-to-date on vaccines. Families must provide immunization records during enrollment. If your child receives an exclusion notice from the state, we cannot provide care until updated immunization records or a legal exemption form is submitted.

Sick Policy

To protect all children, we follow health rules based on state guidance. Please keep your child home if they show signs of illness, such as:

- Fever over 100.4°F
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Cough that won’t stop
- Unusual rash or skin issues

- Breathing trouble or wheezing
- Complaints of serious pain

If your child gets sick at school, we will call you to pick them up. Children must be free from fever and vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school.

Medications

We can give prescription medication at school if:

- The medicine is in the original container
- It's labeled with your child's name and dosage
- You fill out and sign a medication form

Parents must also provide any needed tools like droppers or cups.

Emergency Care

You'll sign a medical consent form during enrollment. In an emergency, we will provide first aid, call 911 if needed, and contact you or your emergency contact. A staff member may accompany your child to the hospital if necessary.

Back-Up Care

We maintain safe adult-to-child ratios. If we are short-staffed and can't meet these ratios, we may have to close for the day. We ask families to plan in advance for alternate care if needed.

Meals and Food Safety

We follow USDA guidelines for meals and snacks. Children receive breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Meals are spaced no more than 3.5 hours apart. Staff sit with children during meals to model healthy habits and encourage conversation.

Water is available throughout the day. Each child has their own cup provided by the center.

Bringing Food from Home:

- Must be ready to eat
- Must be nut-free
- Must be labeled with your child's name
- Must be shelf-stable as no refrigeration is available
- Unopened food will be sent home; opened items will be discarded

Hygiene and Toilet Training

Hand Washing: Children wash hands at key points throughout the day: upon arrival, before meals and snacks, after using the bathroom, and after coughing or sneezing. We teach children about germs and how to stay healthy.

Toilet Training: Children are never denied enrollment based on toilet training. We work with families to support respectful and developmentally appropriate toilet learning. Accidents are handled with care

and without shame. Toileting takes place in clean, private areas, and staff follow hygiene guidelines. Please let us know if your child needs a toileting plan during our orientation meeting.

Assessment and Screening

We observe each child's development and adjust instruction to meet their needs. We use the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) to track growth in communication, motor skills, problem-solving, and personal-social development.

If screenings show typical development, we provide activities to support continued growth. If concerns arise, we'll discuss next steps with you and may refer your child to the Phoenix-Talent School District, SOESD, or Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) services.

Special Education and Early Intervention

We work with local Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) providers to ensure children receive the support they need. This includes:

- ASQ screenings and follow-up evaluations
- Individualized learning plans
- Speech, occupational, and behavioral therapies

We coordinate with healthcare providers and community partners to make sure families receive wraparound services. All support plans are developed with input from families and delivered in a respectful, inclusive way.

Behavior Guidance

Children learn best in a caring, respectful environment where they feel safe. We support children by helping them understand emotions, solve problems, and build friendships. Staff guide behavior by:

- Offering choices and clear expectations
- Redirecting and offering calm-down time
- Modeling how to handle conflict
- Helping children name and manage feelings
- Encouraging empathy and kindness

We know that some children need extra help. When this happens, we meet with families to create support plans. If needed, we may bring in specialists to help. We work together to make sure your child succeeds without being removed from the program.

Suspension and Expulsion Prevention

PTS Rising follows a no-suspension, no-expulsion policy. We use positive behavior supports, collaboration with families, and referrals to specialists as needed. We involve parents in planning and

decision-making and provide written documentation of observations and recommended services.

Support steps may include:

- Behavior observations
- Team meetings with family input
- Referrals to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) or Early Learning Hub services
- Adjustments to classroom routines and supports

Transfers to a different program for better fit are not considered expulsions.

Emergency Procedures

We practice monthly fire drills and regularly practice other emergency routines, like lockdowns and evacuations. If we ever need to evacuate, we will go next door to the PTS Facilities Building. Families will be notified as quickly as possible.

If a lockdown happens, no one can enter or leave the building until authorities say it is safe. We follow the school district's emergency procedures.

Final Policies and Acknowledgment

We respect your family's privacy. All information about your child is kept confidential unless required by law. If your child's custody situation affects school pick-up, please share any legal documents with us.

We are mandatory reporters. If staff suspect child abuse or neglect, we are required to report it to the Oregon Department of Human Services.

We will not release a child to anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. We may call emergency contacts or law enforcement to keep your child safe.

Photos of children may be used in school newsletters or social media with parent permission. You may opt out during enrollment.

We work hard to create a welcoming, caring space for your family. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the director.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Dear Families,

Please sign this acknowledgment, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center before enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time to time, and notice will be provided as updates are made.

Thank you for acknowledging and following the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and care of all children in our program. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the Early Learning Program Family Handbook. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the PTS Rising Early Learning Program Family Handbook that I do not understand.

_____

Parent/Guardian (First/Last Name) (PLEASE PRINT)

_____

Phone Number of Parent/Guardian

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date