



Parent & Guardian Handbook



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Andrew Jay, CEO
andrew@tinytrees.org
P: 206-486-5029

Erin Soper, Director of Education
erin@tinytrees.org
P: 458-202-9960

www.tinytrees.org

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ABOUT TINY TREES PRESCHOOL

Tiny Trees Preschool gives children a quality education and a joyful, nature rich childhood: one full of play, exploration, and wonder. Through the use of outdoor classrooms in Seattle city parks, Tiny Trees eliminates the cost of a brick and mortar facility, making preschool affordable and accessible to all families and allowing us to invest in what really matters: empowering great teachers. An official partner of Seattle Parks and Recreation, Tiny Trees is opening six schools in Seattle in 2016. More information is available by watching [this video from our win of SVP's Fast Pitch Competition](#), listening to [this KUOW interview](#), reading [this recent article on Medium](#), and at TinyTrees.org.

Our vision is to create a community where all children have access to high quality education and develop the social, emotional and academic skills needed to thrive in school and life.

Our core values are the constants that guide our work. As we grow, stumble, innovate and change we focus on:



Our program philosophy is based on the belief that preschool education can incorporate reading, math, and science necessary to succeed in Kindergarten and the social and emotional skills to thrive in school and life all while giving kids a vibrant, rich childhood, full of exploration, play and wonder.

Curriculum

All Tiny Trees schools will use [HighScope](#), a research based, play centric and child led curriculum. It is the ultimate form of [emergent curriculum](#). This type of curriculum is focused around the interest and play of the child where a theme can change week to week, day to day, and even minute to minute. A key tool in High Scope is the “Plan-Do-Review” model that is used by students to decide what they want to explore during their exploration time and by teachers to make sure we are prepared to meet the daily needs of our students. High Scope is designed to help teachers create a daily plan that will help strengthen children’s skills and focus activities and lessons towards the child’s interest.

Our curriculum celebrates that young children learn through hands-on/minds-on experiences. Opportunities are provided each day for children to select, explore and practice skills using a

variety of materials and activities. What may look like “child’s play” to an adult is actually learning in progress. Through play, your child will develop problem solving, social, and language skills. The learning activities provide opportunities for cognitive, physical, social/emotional, language and self-help development.

<p>What activities will we use to teach children reading, math, and science? Some examples include:</p>		
<p>Reading Reading aloud Using complex language Singing together Story dictations Journaling Cooking Writing in front of children Using children’s names, Using different languages in the classrooms Examining trail signs</p>	<p>Math Counting objects Patterning Role model reading numbers Sorting materials Use measurement tools Songs with counting Comparing & contrasting Discussing time Writing numbers</p>	<p>Science Child-led exploration of the natural world Asking open-ended questions Using magnifying glasses Following animal tracks Growing food in a garden Cooking projects Forming hypotheses Noticing seasonal changes</p>
<p>How do we teach social and emotional skills?</p>		
<p>In addition to academic learning, we foster social and emotional skills. We teach to the whole child so children enter kindergarten not just ready to learn to read but also have the executive functions and social skills for lifelong success.</p>	<p>Social and Emotional Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group play and cooperative learning • Promote culturally-rich classrooms with children from different communities sharing and supporting others • Cultivate emotional literacy and empathy to develop self-esteem • Nurture self-expression, creativity and reflection • Encourage family involvement to help students appreciate the wisdom of their families • Peer encouragement • Make and experience the consequences of choices • Develop activities that encourage cognitive growth, problem-solving skills and development of physical motor skills • Provide a supportive, safe learning environment to encourage discovery, questioning and experimentation 	

Program Evaluation and Student Assessment

We measure program quality through the [Early Achievers](#) system developed by the University of Washington and used by the Seattle Preschool Program. To track student progress, teachers use [Teaching Strategies Gold](#), rooting student evaluation in authentic assessment. Differing learning styles, interests and skill levels become evident as teachers informally observe students daily. Assessment tools help us gain insight about children’s cognitive, language,

social, emotional, physical and self-help skills. Because we utilize authentic assessment, it is informal and happens as a routine part of teacher observations. Student assessment is on-going as teachers plan curriculum tailored to each child's needs. We track student progress and gather materials for student portfolios throughout the year. The sole purpose of our assessment is to discover each child's educational needs. This information informs our curriculum and ensures that we are providing the right opportunities, specific to each child, for skill development. Teachers meet weekly and incorporate assessment information into lesson plans. *NOTE: All forms of student evaluation are transparent and accessible to parents. Student records, however, are kept confidential.*

PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE

Session Offerings

Eligibility for Tiny Trees Preschool is determined by the child's age on August 31 in the year of enrollment and if s/he has independent bathroom skills. Children cannot attend both a morning and afternoon session. However, at some sites, there will be an afternoon after-care option for students enrolled in a morning class. The 2016-2017 school year will run September 12 through June 23 and will follow the Seattle Public Schools calendar for breaks and holidays. We are a 10-month program and require a commitment for the entire school year. Additionally, we are proud to offer summer programming for families during July and August (not available at Camp Long). The exact schedule is still to be determined, but families will be able to sign up for weekly or monthly summer preschool programs with priority given to those who are enrolled in our school year program.

<u>School</u>	<u>Monday-Friday</u>	<u>Mon/Wed/Fri</u>	<u>Potential After Care</u>
Camp Long #1	8:30-12:30	1:30-4:30	12:30-4:30
Camp Long #2	8:30-12:30	1:30-4:30	12:30-4:30
Carkeek Park #1	8:30-12:30	1:30-4:30	12:30-4:30
Carkeek Park #2	8:30-12:30		12:30-4:30
Jefferson Park	8:30-12:30	1:30-4:30	12:30-4:30
John C Little Park	8:30-12:30	1:30-4:30	12:30-4:30

A Typical Day

We value spontaneity and take advantage of “teachable moments.” While we do not follow a rigid schedule or rush to complete projects for the sake of moving on to the next activity, we realize that young children first experiencing regular activity away from home often benefit from knowing what to expect. We will maintain a loose schedule, with predictable events. Following a consistent routine day after day gives children the sense of security they need to make choices and take risks, which opens the door to exciting learning opportunities. Our teachers are facilitators, not dictators, of learning. The following is an example of a possible classroom schedule:

Arrival

Both adults and children sign-in. After greeting teachers and friends, students enjoy free exploration.

Group Meeting

Children take part in conversation, engage in music and movement activities, interact with stories and participate in other whole-group activities.

Small Group

Adult-directed activities based on children’s interests that often introduce materials or promote new skills. Working in small groups provides students the opportunity to ask questions while allowing teachers to evaluate each child’s needs and progress.

Snack

Teachers and students eat healthy foods “family style” while enjoying each other’s company.

Active Outdoor Exploration & Choice Time

Students will hike and explore, then have opportunity for the “plan-do-review sequence” unique to HighScope Curriculum. It includes time for children to plan what they want to do during choice time (the area to visit, materials to use and friends to play with); choice time for children to carry out their plans (or shift to new activities that interest them); and finally time for reviewing and recalling with an adult and other children what they've done and learned. Students will be able to choose from activities including: building, art, sensory, science and discovery, writing, reading, dramatic play, music and movement.

Group Meeting

An opportunity to reflect upon the day and come together as a community.

Departure

Adults sign out students and have the opportunity to check in with teachers.

School Closures & Calendar Changes

As an entirely outdoor program, Tiny Trees Preschool is more affected by extreme weather than indoor schools. As much as possible, we will follow the Seattle Public Schools for inclement weather closings. If there is a 2-hour delay for SPS, our morning sessions will be cancelled, afternoon sessions will run as scheduled. On occasion, we may have to close for unexpected circumstances. Any schedule changes will be communicated to families at the earliest opportunity.

Because your child's safety and learning experience is paramount to us, there may be an occasion when inclement weather may cause the limitation or cancellation of school hours independent of the public school system. In case of closure, we will always do our best to notify you as far in advance as possible. If the school should need to close early due to weather, you will be notified by phone.

Seasonal Celebrations, Holidays & Birthdays

In our outdoor and nature based classrooms, each day brings adventure and discovery. We minimize the commercial aspects of holidays and instead focus on changes in seasons and events in the natural world. Our proximity to plant and animal life cycles means that we will have the opportunity to celebrate and appreciate changes in seasons and our natural world. Using a Montessori tradition, each child on their birthday will carry a globe around a "sun" for each year since her/his birth. In honor of your child's birthday, we encourage you to donate a new or used book to the Tiny Trees Preschool library. We will place a bookplate inside the cover with your child's name and date of birth. Each time we read the book, we will fondly remember your child. Thank you for helping our library grow!

PARENT & GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent & Guardian Involvement

Entering preschool is a milestone for youngsters. To ease the transition from home to school, it is a great help to talk regularly with your preschooler about her or his new experiences. It is an opportunity to share the excitement of meeting new people and sharing new ideas. Your preschooler will benefit from your support and understanding as s/he begins to grow outside the home. Recognizing the important connection of home and school, we ask that your involvement include:

- Attending Parent/Guardian Orientation, held in late August or early September without preschoolers, where you will have a chance to meet the teachers and learn what to expect for the coming year.
- If you or a family member has time we encourage volunteering on a semi-regular basis.
- Attending parent/guardian and family activities.
- Being available for a home visit and two parent/guardian-teacher conferences. (The home visit will be arranged at the Parent/Guardian Orientation and will occur in late

August/early September. This gives students a chance to meet teachers before school begins and for you to ask questions while taking care of any last minute paperwork.)

- Reading newsletters and announcements.

You are always welcome to visit your child's school and participate in activities. Join us for a hike, encourage your child to join others in play and exploration or lend your hand at building forts. Please let your child's teachers know if you or other family members plan to visit. Because we go on daily hikes, it may sometimes be difficult to find the class if you arrive mid-session.

What to Bring Each Day

1. **A child-sized backpack large enough to hold a water bottle and extra clothing layers.**
Please assist us by familiarizing your child with the contents of their backpack before school begins so that they are able to find needed items on their own.
2. **A water bottle (filled with water).**
3. **Appropriate weather-related clothing layers.**

Clothing & Dressing for Success

Please provide an extra, labeled set of clothing to leave at school. The set of clothing should include: shirt, pants, underwear and two pairs of socks (one thin, one thick). Be sure to exchange this clothing as your child grows into new sizes and when the seasons change.

Outdoor discovery requires freedom of movement in non-restrictive clothing. Students need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping and climbing. Tight clothing, fancy dresses and costumes can get in the way during active play. For independence in toileting children need clothing that is easy to take on and off. Please dress your child in clothing that can be soiled so s/he will feel free to participate in messy projects and trail hikes. We provide smocks for art projects, however we will not force a child to wear one. You should expect your child (and her/his clothing) to get dirty after a day spent outdoors! If at any time your child's clothing becomes wet and uncomfortable, we will assist her/him in changing into their extra set of clothing.

Please label all removable clothing and other belongings with your child's name, accidents happen and it's easy for clothes to get mixed up.

Communication

Communication between staff and parents/guardians enriches the educational experience of our students. We regularly touch base with parents to provide feedback. Staff will always make time to conference with you via phone, email or in person during non-instruction times should you have a specific question or concern. Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences will be held in late fall and spring. Please take advantage of these special times to dialogue about your child's progress.

We appreciate when families keep the lines of communication open and let us know of significant events. Visitors, moving, new babies, divorce, illness or death can affect children at school. When we are informed about these changes, we are better equipped to offer support and encouragement to your child. If you are aware of an unexplained change in your child's behavior, feel free to discuss it with our staff. NOTE: The teachers' first priority is with students when they are present. If you have a concern that needs discussion, please request a meeting outside of class time.

Confidentiality

Teachers and staff will not discuss private and confidential information regarding the programs, fellow employees, families or children with anyone outside of Tiny Trees Preschool.

Furthermore, teachers and staff will not discuss your child's development or situation with any other parents in the program. The only exception to this is authorized personnel on a need to know basis, particularly as it relates to mandated reporting laws.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Registration & Enrollment

Eligibility for Tiny Trees Preschool is determined by the child's age on August 31 in the year of enrollment and if s/he has independent bathroom skills. Your child must be 3 and no older than 5 on August 31, 2016 (i.e. if your child turns 6 before 8/31 s/he is not eligible to enroll). Unlike in traditional indoor programs, your child will need to frequently negotiate layers of clothing on her or his way to and from the bathroom. Therefore, the ability to know and regulate toileting is a necessity.

To enroll your child in Tiny Trees Preschool, you will need to complete our online registration form, submit the health and safety form and pay a deposit. The deposit will cover your child's last month of preschool, either June or August and can be paid by credit/debit card or check within 10 working days. Those receiving partial financial assistance are still required to pay a deposit. However, a deposit is not required for students in the Seattle Preschool Program-Pathways at Careek Park. The deposit will not be refunded if you withdraw your child earlier than June (summer programs are optional).

Tuition & Financial Assistance

- Monday through Friday, 8:30-12:30: \$720 (regular) or \$500 (fin. assistance) per month.
- Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:30-4:30: \$400 (regular) or \$300 (fin. assistance) per month.

For families who can't afford our financial assistance price we are excited to have been selected as a provider for the Seattle Preschool Program – Pathways. Under this program 16 students at our Carkeek Park location will receive FREE tuition paid for by the City of Seattle. To qualify you

must make below 300% of poverty (\$72,000 for a family of 4) and live in the Seattle city limits. [You can learn more and see if you qualify here.](#)

Tuition Payment Schedule

Unless other arrangements have been made, monthly tuition payments will be charged to the credit or debit card we have on file; this transaction will occur between the 1st to 4th day of the month, beginning in September. You are responsible for tuition regardless of your child's attendance. There is no reduction in tuition for missed days or for days when classes are delayed or canceled.

Late Pick Up Fee (does not necessarily apply to after care)

Please pick up your child when class ends at 12:30 or 4:30. There is a 5-minute grace period until 12:35 or 4:35. If you pick up your child after 12:35/4:35, you will be charged \$1 for each additional minute. This fee is given directly to the teachers to compensate them for their time. If you do not arrive within a timely manner, we will begin calling people on your emergency contact list to pick up your child.

Attendance

Regular attendance is an important element of your child's success. Please speak with your child's teacher if an extended absence is anticipated. If your child will be missing class for any reason, please call her/his teacher.

Withdrawal Policy

It is required that families fulfill the responsibilities outlined in this handbook. As problems arise, be sure to communicate with Tiny Trees staff. When teachers are informed of the situation, most problems can be overcome as staff and families work together. If it becomes evident that a parent is not going to fulfill her or his responsibilities to the program, the child will be withdrawn from the class and a child from the waiting list will be selected to fill the vacancy. If this situation occurs or a child is removed from the class for any other reason, the non-refundable, non-transferable deposit will be held. We reserve the right to remove a child from the class, if necessary, due to behavioral issues, but will work with parents and guardians to the greatest extent possible to address any concerns. **If you choose to withdraw your child from our program, one month's written notice is required and tuition is due during this time.** Your deposit will not be refunded and may not be applied to your final month's payment.

SAFETY AND SUPERVISION

General Safety and Supervision Procedures

Tiny Trees Preschool classes will serve no more than 16 children, have two teachers per class, as well as regular volunteers and apprentices. Adult to child ratios will be 1:8 or better. A cell phone, student medical forms and emergency contact information, first aid kit, emergency

medications and a staff person with current first aid/CPR training will be with the group at all times. An adult will never be alone with your child. To maintain a proper ratio, another adult or other children will always be with a teacher and your child. Volunteers are always under the supervision of Tiny Trees Preschool staff. No child, or group of children, is ever left alone with a volunteer.

Our program promotes independent learning but teachers always monitor students by sight and sound.

Weather

We abide by the Scandinavian saying of, “there’s no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing.” To ensure that our students are warm and dry during the four hours they are with us, we give every child a one-piece rain suit from Oakiwear. With the right layers of clothing underneath students can stay warm and dry to below freezing temperatures. Our play-based curriculum keeps children moving and we carry extra clothes. By managing their own clothing systems, we help students learn self-care and resilience. In the worst weather, we use park picnic shelters and have designated emergency facilities in which to take cover.

Bathrooms

Children are required to have independent bathroom skills by the first day of school. At all public restrooms, a teacher enters first to ensure it is clean, empty and set up for children’s use. Teachers will be available to respond to any bathroom emergencies as well as make sure no one else enters the restroom while Tiny Trees students are present. Hand washing is supervised by teachers and in the case of an accident, we carry clean clothing and clean-up kits.

Health Policy

You can help us to keep preschoolers and staff stay healthy:

Symptoms: we do not expect that a child be kept at home every time s/he has the sniffles; but please see examples of symptoms below to help decide whether or not to send your child to school.

Diagnosis: inform your child’s teacher right away if your child has been diagnosed with any communicable or childhood diseases (see below). This will allow us to inform other preschool families of possible symptoms to look for in their children.

Exposure: Please inform us as soon as possible if your child has been exposed to an illness or disease. This will help us to prepare for and be alerted to the specific symptoms of that illness or disease.

Good Hygiene: You can help us reduce the spread of disease by teaching good hygiene habits at home. Remind your child to wash hands before eating, after using the toilet and after blowing her or his nose. Help your child learn to sneeze or cough into her or his arm and to blow her or his nose when needed. Instilling these habits at home helps reduce the spread of germs both at home and at school.

Symptoms that indicate the need for your child to stay home:

- **Fever of 100 degrees F or higher** accompanied by one or more of the following: diarrhea or vomiting, earache, headache, signs of irritability or confusion, sore throat, rash or fatigue that limits participation in daily activities. The child's temperature must return to normal (98.6°F) for at least 24 hours before coming back to school.
- **Vomiting:** 2 or more occasions in the past 24 hours.
- **Diarrhea:** 3 or more watery stools in the past 24 hours or any bloody stool.
- **Eye Discharge or Pink Eye (conjunctivitis):** conjunctivitis is highly contagious. Students may only return to school when eyes are clear or after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- **Lice or Scabies:** Children who are found to have lice will need to stay home until all lice and nits have been removed. Students with scabies may return after treatment.
- **Skin Rash/Lesions:** especially with fever or itching.
- **Open or oozing sores:** unless properly covered **and** 24 hours has passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if antibiotic treatment is necessary.
- **Sick appearance, not feeling well, and/or not able to keep up with program activities.**

Communicable Diseases

Any child having symptoms of a known communicable or childhood disease may not be at preschool. S/he should be kept home until a doctor has determined that the child does not have a communicable disease, the child is no longer contagious, or the symptoms have disappeared. In the case of communicable diseases, Tiny Trees Preschool may request a doctor's note indicating the child is no longer contagious and is healthy enough to return to school. Please report any communicable or contagious diseases (such as Bacterial Meningitis, Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Hepatitis, Measles, Mumps, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Pneumonia, Rubella, Scarlet Fever or Strep Throat) to our staff as soon as possible. We notify parents and guardians when their child may have been exposed to a communicable disease or condition (other than a common cold) and provide relevant information. Individual child confidentiality is maintained.

Immunizations

To protect all children and staff, each child is required to have the following immunizations:

- DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis)
- IPV (Polio)
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- Hepatitis B
- HIB (Haemophilus influenza type b) *until age 5*
- Varicella (Chicken Pox) or Health Care Provider verification of disease.
- PCV (Pneumococcal bacteria) *until age 5*

Medication Plan

All medications will only be given with prior written consent of the child's parent or guardian on the **Health and Safety Form** (for sunscreen & insect repellent) or a **Medication Authorization**

Form (for all others). The appropriate form must be completed and on file before the medication will be administered.

Prescription medication must be in its original container and be properly labeled with the child's name, name of the prescribing physician, date the prescription was filled, dosage, duration (start and stop dates), and expiration date of the medication. Non-prescription medications must be in the manufacturer's container with a label and have your child's name written on it. Any unused medication not picked up by the parent or guardian will be properly discarded after the stop date on the consent form.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Unshielded exposure to sun and mosquitos can be a danger and discomfort for your child. We recommend sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30 and Insect Repellent with a maximum of 10% DEET. 10% DEET is as effective as higher DEET repellents, but must be applied more often. Most often, we use repellents with all natural ingredients. We ask you that you apply sunscreen and insect repellent when appropriate on your child before you drop her or him off at school. We will let you know when and if insect repellent becomes necessary following the emergence of mosquitos in the spring. We strongly encourage you to give consent on the **Health and Safety Form** for our teachers to apply the sunscreen and repellent on your child. You may provide labeled bottles of sunscreen and repellent for us to use on your child if certain types or brands are preferred.

Emergency Medications

Emergency medications such as Benadryl, Epinephrine ("Epi-Pens") and inhalers will be carried with the first aid kit that is always present with the group and will be administered as needed. Emergency medications must be given to the teachers in advance, with a completed **Medication Authorization Form** that is signed by the child's parent or guardian and physician. If a child has been diagnosed with a life-threatening allergy, parents will also be required to provide an **Emergency Plan for Allergic Reactions** that is signed by the parent or guardian and by the child's physician.

Emergencies and Injuries

Emergency Preparedness

Tiny Trees Preschool has the following procedures in place at all times in preparation for an emergency:

- Fully stocked first aid kits, emergency medical forms and staff with First Aid and CPR training and certification are always present with students.
- Emergency medical forms include parent and guardian contact information, emergency contacts and authorization for the release of a child to other adults, and health and medical details. In addition, these forms give Tiny Trees staff permission to seek emergency medical care should a child require such treatment.

- Preschool staff will have information on the closest emergency medical facilities including location, hours and route to the facility. Enough staff, including back up personnel, will be available so that a teacher can accompany a child during an emergency and remain with the child until a parent or guardian arrives.
- Students and staff will practice fire and evacuation drills.

Response to Injuries and Emergencies

Due to the active nature of preschoolers and our program, minor injuries, bumps and bruises may occur. In the event of a minor injury, the child will be treated with first aid by Tiny Trees staff. The incident will be reported to the parent or guardian at the end of the class session and staff will complete an Incident Report Form. The severity of the injury or incident will dictate whether or not the parent or guardian will receive an immediate phone call.

In the event of an emergency, teachers will assess the situation and, if warranted, call 911. Staff will respond as necessary until emergency help arrives. Parents and guardians will be contacted as soon as possible. In the event that we are unable to reach the child's parent or guardian, we will contact the individual(s) designated as emergency contacts for the child. If the situation requires professional care, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with the child at all times until family members or authorized emergency contacts arrive.

Emotional Safety and Behavior Management

Emotional and physical safety is a core value of Tiny Trees Preschool. We create emotionally safe environments for every child that are caring, supportive and healthy. We do this by creating clear expectations for how we treat each other, giving reasons that children understand and holding children accountable for meeting those expectations.

Discipline is focused on seeing the good in all children and helping students navigate difficult situations rather than punishing certain behaviors. We teach respect, hold students accountable and put behavior in the context of a child's relationship to others. We make sure each child's voice is heard and personal needs accommodated. We communicate clearly and often with parents about their child's needs and behavior.

Mandated Reporting

Washington State Law (WAC 388-150-480) requires childcare professionals to report any or all suspected cases of child abuse, neglect or exploitation to Child Protective Services or to a local law enforcement agency immediately. Tiny Trees Preschool teachers receive training in Child Abuse Prevention.

Grievance Policy

If you have any concerns that you don't feel are adequately addressed by teachers or relates to teacher performance, please contact Erin Soper, Director of Education at erin@tinytrees.org or 458-202-9960

Non-discrimination Policy

We welcome all children and all families and work every day to create an emotionally and physically safe space for each of our students, our families and our staff. To support this work we follow this non-discrimination policy:

Tiny Trees Preschool recruits and admits students of any sex, gender identity, religion, race, color, physical or developmental ability or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities. In addition, the school will not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender identity, religion, race, color, physical or developmental ability or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship/loans/fee waivers (if offered), educational programs and/or athletics/extracurricular activities. In addition, the school is not intended to be an alternative to court or administrative agency ordered, or public school district initiated, desegregation. Tiny Trees Preschool will not discriminate on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, color, physical or developmental ability or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified or non-certified personnel.