

# Kinder Garden Outdoor Immersion Play School

2019-2020 Parent Handbook

[www.kindergardenplayschool.com](http://www.kindergardenplayschool.com)

**Kinder Garden** is an entirely outdoor education program that is distinguished by its commitment to complete nature immersion; incorporating tenets of child-led, inquiry-based learning in a setting of authentic play. Our school is designed to integrate children with nature and engage them in quality outdoor activities which stimulate their innate curiosity about the natural world. Our teaching style encourages children to learn through direct experience with nature.

**TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM:** We believe that children between the ages of 3 and 6 learn best through direct experience with the natural world. Our lesson plans flow organically from what nature presents us with each day. Our goal is to tap into children's sense of wonder about nature while teaching basic environmental and natural science principles. We promote individual empowerment alongside building a community of explorers. We teach respect for all living things and how to care for the earth we share.

**TEACHERS:** Our teachers have experience in a variety of teaching philosophies which complement their experience both with outdoor skills as well as their work with preschool students. Detailed information about our teachers' qualifications can be viewed on our website. All Kinder Garden teachers and staff are current in their First Aid and CPR certification and have passed an extensive criminal background check. While school is in session, we can be reached on-site at 503-804-4064. Otherwise please email us at [kindergardenplayschool@gmail.com](mailto:kindergardenplayschool@gmail.com).

**COMMITMENT TO YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICAL SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING:** As naturalists we are committed to inspiring and teaching respect for the earth and all its creatures. This includes modeling and fostering respect for self and for others at all times. We discourage competitiveness in favor of cooperative activities, guiding children into co-creative adventures. As children this age develop they become even more social and adventurous. Throughout the school day teachers incorporate social-emotional learning by modeling and teaching children ways to solve disagreements or work through frustrating tasks. We value peace in our community; aggressive behaviors (such as hitting, name calling, or pushing) will be worked through in a conversation where the child's concerns can be heard one-on-one. As educators we model and practice speaking respectfully and encourage children to respect and care for one another.

**DRESSING APPROPRIATELY:** Dressing your child appropriately for three-four hours of outdoor play is critical for a successful immersion program. We adhere to the motto: There is no such thing as bad weather, only unprepared clothing choices. Each child is required to keep a full set of extra clothes in a cubby in our locking children's storage space. Children's clothing should be something they can get messy in, as we never know what the day's adventures might be. Please do not dress your child in any one-piece clothing (outerwear excluded) as it is very difficult to

remove quickly when they have to use the bathroom. All clothing and footwear should be loose fitting and roomy to allow the body's own insulating layer to surround the skin. A detailed list of recommended and required clothing/outerwear will be sent out mid-summer.

Remember that this is an entirely-outdoor school. Please make sure that you and your child are both okay with being solely outdoors during this time. Remember too that your child may not experience cold in the same way that you do and to resist overdressing them. Send extra clothes and know that we will be very diligent about when to insist they put on more outerwear. Most important, keep your attitude positive about blustery cold rainy days as some of our most fun days will be in this type of weather!

**EXTREME WEATHER CLOSURE:** Kinder Garden is committed to its nature immersion programs regardless of the weather, except in cases where driving becomes dangerous. All classes will be cancelled if the North Clackamas School District has called for a snow day cancellation; likewise classes start on a delay in cases where the school district calls for a late start.

**TOILET PROFICIENCY:** All children *must* be mostly toilet-proficient to attend our school (other than those enrolled with prior permission). Although we can handle occasional accidents, children should know when they need to use the bathroom and be able to communicate that. We have an outdoor toilet for their use which are sheltered from the elements. We regularly prompt children to determine if they need to use the bathroom.

**Kinder Garden FAMILY:** We strive to create a community among families in our school. To facilitate that we host a *September Family Meet and Greet*, *two family hikes* and an *End-of-the-Year Party*. We also keep a private facebook group for families to keep up-to-date on their child's activities at school and for parents to connect for play dates etc.

**APPLICATIONS:** We invite all families to begin applying after they have toured the farm and met the teachers. After applications are received, if both families and our teachers agree that our community is a good fit, you will be required to sign the "Contract for Enrollment" document as well as a \$200 deposit to secure your child's place in the 2019-20 class (This deposit will be split between a \$100 materials fee and as a security deposit to be applied towards the June/2020, tuition.)

**2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR SCHEDULE:** Kinder Garden Playschool operates Tuesday and Thursday from September through June based largely on the school calendar of North Clackamas School District. A few deviations from that calendar will be noted in our preschool calendar, which includes 2 family hikes scheduled on North Clackamas closure dates. As a community we will meet at local, family friendly hiking spots to enjoy new trails and paths and enjoy our friends while learning the rules of hiking in our community. (these days will be posted in our official calendar, released mid-summer).

Summer preschool camp sessions will be available to current students as well as community preschoolers during July and August; camps require registration in May with pre-payment in full by May 15.

**DROP OFF/PICK-UP AND LOCATION OF SCHOOL:** Our physical address is 7054 SE Clackamas Road in Milwaukie. Please drive slowly out of respect for our neighbors. Parking is limited so please be conscious of making timely drop-offs and pickups and do not block the neighboring driveways. Parking is available on property as well as across the street on north side and to the east on the southside of street.

The school entrance is located on the second driveway (gravel), through the gate. When you arrive each morning, please wait at the entrance until the teachers come out and greet you. We will unlock the gate at 8:55 to welcome students in. At pick-up, you will come to the same space to get your children. Please be prompt in your pick-up. If non-parent caregivers are picking up, please emphasize both the need to drive slowly as they pull in as well as the need for prompt pick-ups. The first two weeks of class we ask parents and care providers are able to show us their IDs to ensure the safety of our students.

**TUITION:** Tuition is due by the first class date of each month. Please be mindful of dropping tuition off at drop-off. All late payments will be assessed a \$25 late fee per class period that has passed. If you have questions about this please talk to Miss Ronita PRIOR to the due date.

**LATE PAYMENT POLICY:** If your tuition is not paid by the seventh of the month, you will be assessed a \$25, unless you have received prior permission from Kinder Garden Director: Ronita Lussier. We require one month's notice for any changes that may affect your child's schedule at Kinder Garden. You will be responsible for any tuition due during that one month.

**FOOD:** Along with lunch we provide children with a healthy, organic snack midway through each class and will make sure they drink lots of water. Please send a water bottle with your child every morning with their name clearly written on the outside of the bottle. We also provide lunch on site each day with the children participating in preparation and serving of the meal. This community meal encourages children to be more adventurous in their eating and gives them an opportunity to serve and be served by their peers as they work together.

**SICK CHILD POLICY:** We are fine with children coming to school with sniffles/sneezes and mild coughs since we are outdoors and there is less chance to pass germs than in an indoor setting. We do not allow children to attend if they have had a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the previous 24 hours. We also require that students who are unable to manage their symptoms (realizing runny noses need to be wiped, coughs need to be into elbow etc) stay home until they are symptom free. We appreciate all of our communities help in keeping our students and families healthy! Please contact your child's teacher via text message (503-804-4064) or email (kindergardenplayschool@gmail.com) to let them know your child will be out for the day.

**ABSENCE POLICY:** Please contact (in-person, text, or email) us if your child will not be in school on a particular day. This policy is a courtesy to our teachers to make them aware of any changes in schedule and so they can plan for any changes in our community's day.

**SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:** Kinder Garden Playschool is dedicated to ensuring that our programs are accessible to all, regardless of their ability to pay. Towards that end, we have established a reduced tuition fund to offer a slightly lower rate to two families each year. Contact us directly if you'd like to apply, these spaces will be determined mid-February.

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