

August 16, 2018

Dear Kindergarten Families,

I hope this letter finds you enjoying the warm, sunny days of August and making memories with your dear children! We are delighted to welcome all of you to our kindergarten program and look forward with joy to a wonderful year together. This year, we are welcoming back our lovely assistant teacher Ms. Susan, as well as a wonderful new assistant teacher, Ms. Cara. Ms. Cara will be joining us on Mondays and Tuesdays and Ms. Susan will be here Wednesdays – Fridays. There is much information to share with you pertaining to the start of school – please read this letter carefully!

Daily Rhythm

<u>Morning</u>	<u>Afternoon</u>
8:20 Classroom Door Opens	12:35 ½ Day Release
8:25 Classroom Door Closes*	12:35 Puzzles, Books, and Table Choices
8:30 Morning Circle	(Coloring, Games, Handwork, Dough, Crafts)
8:45 Morning Activity & Play	1:05 Outdoor Play (Rest on Fridays)
9:45 Tidy Up & Circle	2:00 Rest & Story (1:55 Walk on Fridays)
10:10 Snack	2:30 Closing Circle
10:40 Outdoor Play	2:45 Full Day Release
11:40 Storytelling	
11:55 Lunch	

<u>Weekly Rhythm</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>
Activity:	Painting/Beeswax	Baking	Coloring	Soup	Handwork
Snack:	Rice/Fruit	Millet/Fruit	Bread/Fruit	Soup/Bread	Oats/Fruit

*Once the classroom door is closed, please check in at the office to get a tardy slip. We will open the door after morning circle. Please do not knock, as this can be disruptive to morning circle. Your patience and understanding is greatly appreciated.

Full/Half-day and 4/5 Day Options

We realize that 5 full days can be a very long week for many young children and it is our greatest hope that your child's first experience with school will be a positive and joyous one! Waldorf kindergarten programs generally run 3-5 half days, and prior to the Oregon mandate a few years ago, many public kindergartens were also half-day. As a Waldorf-inspired public kindergarten program, which seeks to be developmentally appropriate and to honor and preserve the sacredness of early childhood, we offer both half-day and full-day options, and 4 or 5 day options. I encourage all parents to take some time to consider these questions:

- What is my child's stamina in social situations? Our whole day is a series of social situations and this can be quite taxing on budding social skills! Since skills are just being formed at this age, it is ideal for children to have opportunities to practice them when they are at their best. This allows them to work through challenges and disagreements without developing bad habits due to social-emotional exhaustion.
- What is my child's stamina for following directions and participating as a member of a large group for long periods of time? Our full day is about 6.5 hours and includes many transitions and group activities.
- What is my child's experience and comfort level with being in a school setting and/or away from parents?

- Am I seeking an experience that is most similar to a traditional Waldorf kindergarten?
- Does my child still take an afternoon nap?

These considerations can help you decide which of our options will best meet your child's needs. You will be asked to make a designation on the enclosed student information sheet.

Snack

We have the most wonderful snack! All organic grains and fruits, and homemade goodness. It is so nice to eat together and share in the same food, some of which we even prepare together! Parents are asked to provide this food for the children, as well as supplies to keep our kindergarten kitchen running (dish soap, sponges, etc.). You will find monthly sign-up sheets on the bulletin board outside our classroom. We ask that all families contribute at least one item (enough for the whole class) each month unless you are experiencing food scarcity in the home.

Lunch

In addition to sharing a snack together, we have the joy of eating lunch together in the classroom and families are invited to provide a home lunch (free of sugary snacks) or sign up for our amazing cafeteria lunch program. If you are sending a home lunch, please include all necessary utensils, as we do not always have extras available at lunch time.

Things to bring to school

Indoor shoes: The children need shoes that can stay at school, go on easily, and stay on. We ask that you please avoid bedroom slippers or backless shoes like clogs or flip-flops, as it can be a challenge for young children to keep these on during our movement time and slippers can get very soggy during winter fire drills.

Extra clothing: We will go outside every day, and will take a walk each Friday. On cold or wet days, hats, gloves, warm jackets, raincoats, rain pants, and mud boots are required. Being in Oregon, rain gear needs to be available every day! Even with all this extra gear, children will occasionally get wet or muddy...and many kindergarteners will have an "accident" at some point in the school year. For this reason, we ask that you please keep a couple plastic bags (preferably with handles) and a full change of season-appropriate clothing at school for your child, and replenish/replace when necessary. This includes socks and underwear. Extra gloves are great in the coldest months as well. Please label your child's clothes.

Vegetables: Each child is invited to bring a vegetable to add to our soup each Thursday.

Things to leave at home

Backpacks: Our cubby space is limited and backpacks are not necessary for our kindergarten program. We are able to make exceptions for children who may be traveling between households via school. Please notify me if this is needed for your child.

All home toys, playthings, candy, gum, etc: Personal treasures tend to encourage distraction and exclusion; it's so tempting to go to the cubby to look at or play with treasures and it's just not that easy to share with 17 other children! If toys, playthings, candy, or gum accidentally make their way to school, they will be kept in a safe teacher spot and returned to the parent. Occasionally, items such as jewelry, lip balms, or hairpieces become playthings and, in those cases, they will be treated as such and kept in a safe teacher spot.

Clothing with commercial images or advertising: Please try to avoid as much as possible clothing with advertising slogans, logos, or movie/cartoon characters. We will also do our best to keep our school hallways and classrooms free of commercial advertising.

Drop-off/Pick-up

For your child's comfort and safety, we ask that you please escort your child to our classroom door each day, ensure that they change into their indoor shoes (the indoor shoe cubby will be placed in the breezeway), and say good-bye before your child enters the classroom. It is so helpful for all if this transition is finished BEFORE the child enters the classroom environment. It is also helpful if parents do not linger outside the classroom once children have entered, as this can be quite distracting and contribute to feelings of separation anxiety. If you are volunteering or attending your child's birthday celebration, you will be asked to enter the classroom when the timing is appropriate. Drop-off time is 8:20-8:25. Once the door has closed, you will need to go to the office for a tardy pass and wait for us to receive your child after morning circle time is over. We will open the door to release children at 12:35 for half day and 2:45 for full day. In order to help us keep the children safe and avoid distracting the class, we ask that parents and students refrain from opening the door without permission from a teacher.

Parent Meetings

Our first parent meeting will be held early in September, in conjunction with the "All School Meeting." We will spend some time getting to know each other and review important information to know as we embark on the kindergarten journey together. Watch in email newsletters for information about future meetings.

Days leading up to school

In preparation for the first day of school, families are invited and encouraged to drop-in and help with classroom tasks. This allows the child and teachers to meet, see parents and teachers working together, and is an opportunity for each child to explore the classroom before the school year begins. This can be very important for young children as they transition to school. This is also the best time to drop off your child's extra clothing and indoor shoes, and your student information sheet. Open classroom hours will be: **Tuesday, August 28, from 2:30-4pm and Friday, August 31, from 10am-11:30am.**

Please join us for a kindergarten picnic potluck Thursday, August 30th at the Friendly Street Park (corner of Monroe St & 27th) from 5-6pm. This is a free-form gathering for the children and parents to play! Please bring picnic ware and a potluck dish to share.

First day of school

On the first day of school, if you were unable to attend open classroom hours, you may walk your child into the classroom and help them find their cubby space and hang up their extra clothes. You may already be aware that the first day of school is a half day and lunch will not be served. Please check school correspondence for the actual release time.

Warmly,
Denise, Susan, and Cara

Student Information sheet

Child's name _____

Child's Birthday _____

Please indicate your choice of the following options for Kindergarten Schedule:

Full day - (Monday through Friday)

Full day - (Monday through Thursday)*

Half Day - (Monday through Friday)

*Children who attend 4 days will do handwork throughout the week.

For the sake of consistency for children, changes to the parents' choice of schedule may be made effective on the following dates, assuming prior discussion with Ms. Denise and notification to the office.

- Up to September 17th, 2018

- November 19, 2018

- January 8, 2019

- April 9, 2019

Parent's names _____

Sibling names, ages, Teachers _____

Parent contact Info (Address, phone #s, email)

Please share a little about your child's strengths, any concerns you or your child may have about kindergarten, and any other information you think may be helpful:

Volunteer positions

Please mark your top 3 choices, (1= 1st choice...)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Painting 8:25-9:20	-----				
Walks 1:55-2:45					-----
Soup 8:25-9:20				-----	
Handwork 8:45-9:30					-----
Playground 10:45-11:30	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

*Bathroom Deep Cleaning during teacher meetings -----

*Laundry (Take home Fri, return Mon, use natural unscented detergent) -----

*Classroom coordinator (Helps organize parent helpers for class and school events, assists teacher in parent communication regarding birthday circles)-----

Volunteer Information and Etiquette

Volunteers are a crucial part of our kindergarten program and we are so pleased to have your help with some of our most involved activities!

All volunteers who work in the classroom/playground, accompany us on field trips, or volunteer for special events will **need to have a Background Check on file in the office.**

Please be sure to respect the times of your volunteer position. It can be detrimental to our program if volunteers show up late. On the other end, it can be very distracting when parents linger in the classroom.

Please respect the confidentiality rights of all children in the classroom and their families. If you should overhear sensitive information or observe a child struggling behaviorally or otherwise, please refrain from discussing this with others. If you observe something that concerns you or that you are not sure we are aware of, please bring it to the attention of the classroom teachers only.

Thank you so much for your willingness to help support our program. We can't do it without you!