



*A Play Based, Waldorf Inspired, Preschool for 3-5 year olds*

## **Parent Handbook**

### **Is this an art school?**

While the mission of Silverton Arts Association includes increasing public awareness of the arts through education, preschool children use art primarily as a form of communication. Their paintings, sculptures, and drawings may not be a "picture," but a story they need or want to tell. It may be an expression of emotion, or an exploration of their environment through materials. Students at The Park House Preschool will receive instruction in the basics of visual art, and meaningful experiences in music, movement, and dramatic play, but the arts act as a backdrop to the curriculum, and as a tool for children to communicate and express themselves.

We feature a monthly famous artist and create projects inspired by their styles.

### **Philosophy**

The Park House preschool is a play-based, Waldorf inspired preschool located in Silverton, Oregon. At The Park House children are invited to play, explore and imagine in a loving environment filled with the natural world at their own developmental pace. Daily activities provide a comforting and reliable rhythm. Watercolor painting, songs, nature walks, and stories honor the natural world and changing seasons. The children learn to play harmoniously with an established circle of friends. Outside, children will discover and play in natural settings. Inside and outdoor activities are set up based upon the children's interest, while also helping them develop a curiosity and appreciation for nature. Our days move gently through activities, with transitions that are invited through song or verse.

**Free play is the way children practice being in the world, how they test ideas, solve problems, and find enjoyment. It lays a foundation for creative thinking, enriches imagination, and encourages social relationships.**

**As children play, they will experience growth in all areas of development:**

- Small Motor Skills: stringing small objects, picking up treasures, using crayons & pencils, scissors, eyedroppers, tongs
- Cognitive Growth: puzzles, wooden blocks, games, science activities, magnets, magnifying glasses
- Social & Emotional Growth: dramatic play center, real/pretend cooking, dressing-up, playing with cars, castles, trains, and dollhouses
- Language Growth: morning meeting, singing, poetry, language games, stories
- Large Motor Skills: nature walks, climbing equipment, music and movement, dancing

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Director/Head Teacher

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503.873.6390 preschool      503.409.6127 Teacher Tina's cell

## Policies and Procedures

### Enrollment Fee

A \$50 enrollment and materials fee must be received before placement in our program. The enrollment fee allows your enrolled child to attend classes and camps the SAA offers at membership prices.

### Tuition Payment/Obligation

The school year runs from September thru mid-June. Tuition is \$3000 a year. Three Payment options are available.

**Option #1** Families can elect to pay their \$3000 balance in full by the first day of school, if this option is chosen the family is eligible for a 5% tuition discount.

**Option #2** Families can elect to pay their \$3000 balance in 10 equal payments of \$300 monthly beginning in September and ending in June.

**Option #3** Families can elect to pay their \$3000 balance in 8 equal payments of \$375 a month beginning in September and ending in May. **This option has no tuition payments in December or June.**

Payments are due on the first of the month with a \$25 late fee applied to payments made after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Monthly payments do not vary regardless of months with holidays. Tuition payments are non-refundable. It is understood that a child who is admitted is enrolled for the entire school year. A 10% discount is given to those families with more than one child enrolled. First child pays full price and the second child will receive the 10% discount.

### Termination of Enrollment/Withdrawal

Every measure will be taken to resolve conflicts as they arise, however The Park House Preschool reserves the right to terminate enrollment of any student at our discretion. If you plan to withdraw, kindly give at least 4 weeks' notice. Tuition refunds will not be given if you choose to withdraw before the end of the month. In order to avoid tuition for a given month, written notification of your intent to withdraw must have been received one month in advance. (For example, the March payment would not become payable if the office receives such notification on or before February 1st.) Our hope in this policy is to better accommodate waiting families in a timely manner.

### Hours

The Park House Preschool day begins at 9:00am and ends at 12:00pm. It is important that the children arrive on time for their preschool day. Please pick up your child promptly as it can be very stressful for them to be waiting on a parent or guardian who is late. If your child is going to be late or absent, or if you are going to be late picking up your child up, please call or text Teacher Tina at 503-409-6127. You will be considered late as of 12:15 after that you will owe \$1.00 per minute per child. You may pay this fee when you pick up your child, or it will be added to your next months' tuition. This policy must be enforced to allow me to complete my cleanup & next day preparation responsibilities before I leave.

### Pick up/Drop off

Each morning, you must sign in on the sign in sheet. Please notify me if a different person will be picking up your child. If the person who is picking up your child changes, you must phone and speak directly to me. We cannot release a child to someone who is not on the sign in form.

### Saying Goodbye

You may say goodbye at any point, but it helps to say goodbye at the same point every day. We recommend a brief goodbye at the cubbies before your child enters the classroom to explore. This seems to be less stressful for the children. I will always be there to help ease the transition. You and your child may come up with a special ritual like "The Kissing Hand", or the promise of a silly face out the window (I've seen this work wonders!). Younger siblings may come join us explore in the mornings and at 9:15am I will ring the Goodbye Bell for an easy transition for brother or sister to say goodbye.

## Calendar

The Park House Preschool follows the Silver Falls School district calendar. You will receive a monthly calendar of preschool activities.

## Photo Permission

By signing the Enrollment Application Form, I give The Park House preschool permission to use photos of my child for promotional material. By signing this permission form I understand that The Park House may use photographs of my child and/or family on the school's promotional flyers, forms, handouts, newsletters and website. If you do not wish to have your child's photo taken please ask the director to make a note in your file.

## Toys from Home

We ask families to please allow children to play with the toys we provide at school and to leave personal toys at home. In our classrooms we try to provide play items that engage the child's imagination and provide them with the opportunity for healthy group play. Classroom items are also more neutral in the arena of possession, i.e. they belong to us all, whereas toys from home are not as neutral. Treasures from nature are welcome and will find a home on our nature table.

## Administering Medication

As our preschool is only a few hours, it is best to administer any medications your child might need before or after our preschool hours. Epi-pens or inhalers, however, will be offered to children with parents' written consent. A medication consent form must be completed. The Epi-pen and inhaler must be clearly labeled in your child's name and in its original container. A written record of what is given and the dosage will be kept in our records. Any unused medication will be returned to the parent.

## Illness/Accidents/Injury

A child who has not slept well or who is not feeling well needs to be at home. If there is any question of illness, particularly of fever or communicable disease please inform me and keep your child at home until they are well again at least one day before they return to the social group. If your child becomes ill while at school, we will contact you and provide a quiet resting area with close supervision until the child is picked up. In addition, children will be sent home if lice, nits or eggs are found. The Park House Preschool will notify the parents any time the child is seriously injured. If the parents cannot be reached, we will contact the person listed as an emergency contact on the child's application form. An accident report will be kept on file in the school's office. Our staff is current on their First Aid and CPR certification.

## Clothing

### **Your child is going to get dirty when in school with us.**

We do not discourage children from getting dirty or wet. For this reason it is important that they be sent to school with an appropriate set of clothing so that we can ensure your child is comfortable and warm. We go outside every day. All children must be prepared to play outside. When you are outdoors, comfort is very important. Good clothing makes the difference between a child who is engaged with the environment and a child who is uncomfortable and unhappy. Shoes and clothing that your child can put on/take off themselves helps them feel successful and builds confidence. Please send a set of extra clothing & a pair of rubber boots with your child to be kept at school. Also, children will take off their shoes when they arrive at school every day. It keeps the school cleaner and avoids fingers and toes from getting hurt when stepped on.

## Field trips

We plan many field trips over the course of the school year. Volunteers are needed and encouraged to join us for these excursions. By signing the Enrollment Application Form, I give The Park House preschool permission to take excursions away from the school. For specifically identified "field trips" a trip permission form will be issued on an as needed basis.

## Inclement Weather

The Park House Preschool follows the Silver Falls School District regarding closure delays in the event of inclement weather. If school has been canceled due to snow, we will add a "snow day make up day" to our calendar.

## Snacks

Snacks should be brought in a simple basket or container. No sweets or desserts. Please make your food choices as healthy as possible and keep packaging natural and simple as possible: cloth napkins and reusable containers are the best way to reduce trash. We recycle as much as possible. Please make sure all snack containers are free of characters, logos and advertising.

## Toilet Ready

A child's readiness for preschool starts at home. At the time of enrollment, a preschool ready child should be able to use the toilet, separate from mom, show interest in making friends, etc. The Park House Preschool requires students to be toilet ready. If you have any concerns regarding your child's toileting abilities, please speak to me.

## Child Guidance

Working with a consistent daily rhythm and the models of respect and cooperation, our approach to child guidance is loving firmness, as it nurtures all children. I will continually encourage healthy and appropriate behaviors in a loving, clear way throughout the day. When play becomes too rough or wild, I will redirect the children to another activity or space. Sometimes a brief time to watch quietly or work beside me may be necessary. The children come to know and rely on boundaries which are upheld firmly and lovingly. The children are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for their own actions. I use affirmative language to guide behavior. (e.g. "use gentle hands", "walking feet please")

## Media

Movies and television have an extremely strong influence over a young child's psyche. The influence of television, movies, hand held devices and video games on developing minds is well documented and researched. Please avoid sending your child in clothing that has characters on it so that the clothing does not influence the children's play. We want to see children's imaginations and creativity grow and develop in the classroom. For this reason we do ask that your children not watch movies or television on nights before they come to class as it affects their play in the classroom significantly. While it is not our place to dictate what goes on in your home we do ask that parents be mindful of the media their children consume, we strongly encourage families with young children to use *guided media practices* as much as possible and to limit their exposure.

## Waiting List Policy

Applicants who wish to have their child's name placed on the waiting list must come in for a classroom visit with their child. No registration fee is required at this time. Admission will be granted on the basis of availability. Parents/Guardians will be notified by email or phone when space becomes available and a one-time non-refundable \$50 fee will be required. Enrollment must begin within 1 week or the space will be forfeited and the client's name will be removed from the waiting list.

*\*The Park House preschool is not equipped to manage children with special needs.*

## FAQ'S

### Why four days a week?

I believe one of the greatest gifts I can offer your child is the stability of one consistent group of children that will be his or her classmate's every day. It's important to make friends, to build relationships, to feel safe and to have the comfort and routine that only one class can offer. The 4-day a week program is really again, the ideal. Children thrive in an environment of routine, they like to know what they are doing each morning, they like to know what they can expect at school, they like to carry-on the game from yesterday, they like to see the same friends every morning. One of the many things I learned was if you have a break in between every school day, than every day is a Monday and nobody wants that. 5 days was a little too much, 2 days was too little, 3 days was pretty good and 4 days was perfect!

### How does Park House Preschool prepare my child for kindergarten?

A terrific amount of thought, study and research went into building the curriculum for Park House Preschool. Our goal is to create a daily experience that is warm and nurturing and creatively splendid, while simultaneously providing all the necessary tools for kindergarten readiness.

The Waldorf Whole Child curriculum is outstanding in meeting most of the areas to be assessed, but not necessarily all of them. So, by design, Park House Preschool is "**Waldorf inspired**", as opposed to following Waldorf in its entirety. In recognizing that many of our students will not attend a Waldorf elementary school, we felt it is important to support reading readiness. Therefore, we live fully in the realm of traditional Waldorf storytelling and puppetry, but we also read books, use name recognition and introduce letters and numbers every day. Our objective is to relish all the beauty and purity of the Waldorf curriculum, as well as meet each marker for kindergarten readiness. The Waldorf and the early reading academic really do work together seamlessly, if it is allowed to just happen naturally without forcing either.

## Rhythm of the Preschool Day

9:00-9:45	Exploration
9:45-9:55	Clean Up
9:55-10:05	Morning Meeting
10:05-10:25	Music and Movement
10:30-10:55	Healthy Snack Time
10:55-11:15	Outdoor Play
11:20-11:50	Art
11:50-12:00	Reflection
12:00	Good-bye!