

Detroit Waldorf School

Early Childhood Center Parent Handbook



Contents

Rhythm	3
Media: Television, Videos, Movies, Audio Tapes & Discs, Computers and Virtual Reality	3
Arrival and Departure	3
Food	4
<i>Snacks</i>	4
<i>Lunch</i>	4
Clothing	4
Health	5
Behavior Guidelines in the Early Childhood Center	6
Recommended Reading	6
<i>Child Development</i>	6
<i>Parenting and Rhythmical Family Life</i>	6
<i>Effects of Media</i>	7

Early Childhood

Through the first seven years of life young children want to be part of everything grownups do. The children joyfully imitate our daily work: sweeping, gardening, washing, cooking, and beautifying our environment. In a Waldorf Kindergarten the children are involved in activities in which the teacher is a model of meaningful movements and purposeful use of language. In this atmosphere of beauty and rhythm, the teacher works to cultivate the healthy development of the child's will.

Our Early Childhood Center programs offer classes for children ages birth through six years of age. These include: Parent-Child classes mixed age Pre-School classrooms and a Kindergarten class..

Rhythm

From the moment of birth a child's life is regulated by rhythm, for example, breathing in and breathing out, and sleeping and waking. We are surrounded by rhythm in nature; day and night, the days of the week, the monthly moon phases, and the seasons of the year. When children experience healthy rhythm, their lives are filled with security and discipline.

In the Children's Center, we are guided by daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms that manifest in activities that provide this security for the child. The children engage in imaginative play, painting, cooking, baking, gardening, circle and story time. Parents can nurture health and a sense of security with a rhythmic life for the child at home. The use of morning, mealtime and bedtime routines will help to create a rich and harmonious childhood.

Media: Television, Videos, Movies, Audio Tapes & Discs, Computers and Virtual Reality

There is a growing awareness that media in all forms produces effects in children regardless of the content, or the time given to it. We have found that its influence significantly interferes with what Waldorf Early Childhood education has to offer the young child. At DWS, we cherish and endeavor to protect your child's early life experiences, for this is a time to grow and learn through creative activity, nature, purposeful work, imaginative play and social integration.

To enhance your child's development, we suggest that you eliminate all forms of media from his or her life, including TV, videos, video games, movies, audio tapes and discs, computers, virtual reality, Wii, etc. For those parents who have made this choice, we appreciate the many challenges such a decision involves. For those parents who are confronting this issue for the first time, we are interested in being of help and support in any way we can.

The quality of your child's school experience depends on your judgment in this matter, and supporting the school in your home life. Please refer to the reading list at end of this handbook for sources of information on this subject.

Arrival and Departure

The day begins at 8:30am

Before-care is available from 7:30 - 8:00 a.m. (Fees apply)ll-day Program hours are 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Half-day program hours are 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

After-care is available from 3:15 to 6:00 p.m.(Fees apply)

***Note: Aftercare begins at 3:15pm, children on the playground at 3:15 will be charged the aftercare fee.**

Please call the school if your child will be late or absent for any reason.

Whether your child's class begins indoors or out, having them start the day together as a group helps establish a healthy rhythm. Late arrival makes it more difficult for your child to find his/her place within the group.

Please sign out your child when you leave, rather than signing them out and then leaving them with our staff to go and pick up other children, to socialize or to go to the office.

Food

If you have questions regarding nutrition and your child, please feel free to ask the teachers.

Snacks

Snack time is an important part of our morning and we provide a snack with wholesome, mainly organic ingredients. Snacks are arranged in a weekly rhythm and include things such as cooked whole grains, homemade bread, vegetables and fruit. The snacks are prepared fresh each morning. However, this does not replace a nourishing, unhurried breakfast at home before arriving at the Children's Center.

Lunch

Children staying for lunch will need to bring lunch from home. We ask that this be a wholesome, nutritious lunch – please, no soda pop, sugar water, “Lunch-ables,” candy or sugary snacks. (Please refer to DWS school-wide Parent Handbook.) It is not necessary to send a drink for lunch, water is always available in the classroom for the children.

Some suggestions: sandwich, soup, leftovers, yogurt, vegetables, fruit, cheese, etc.

Please include an ice pack in the lunch box, should it contain anything perishable. Food cannot be heated up at school therefore all hot item must be sent in a thermos. All lunch containers should be labeled .

Note: Some children in your class may have allergies; please keep this in mind when packing your child's lunch, as even being in proximity to certain foods (like peanuts and peanut butter) may trigger an allergic reaction in some children.

Clothing

Label all Items Clearly

Our Early Childhood program provides an active environment. The most appropriate type of clothing for your child is clean comfortable, properly fitting play clothes. Natural fibers allow the child's body to breathe properly and be kept warm. Each morning the children may be outdoors for up to an hour. It is important that your child is dressed appropriately.

Rubber boots, rain pants, and raincoat are necessary for dewy mornings as well as rainy days. Sun hats are often needed for sunny days.

In winter, warm, lined boots, hats, scarves, mittens, warm coats, and snow-pants are necessary. **Warmth is of utmost importance** for the young child's health and well being. Please dress your child in layers, which would always include an undershirt. Extra layers can always be taken off if the day grows warmer. Please, no bare arms and legs at the start of the day.

The children will need a pair of sturdy “indoor” shoes, which will be kept at school. These shoes should permit good heel-toe movement, be flexible, and provide support, such as a lightweight sneaker. Recheck your child's

shoe size throughout the year, little feet grow remarkably fast! They should also have outdoor shoes, when boots are not needed.

When choosing clothing for your child, consider that much of what is sold is trendy and unsuitable for a child's healthy development. We ask that their clothing be free of logos, TV, cartoon or movie characters, , print or slogans, skulls, scary images, etc. (Please refer to DWS school-wide Parent Handbook.). These can influence the play and attentiveness of the children in a group setting.

Lastly, please provide a complete change of clothing, to remain at school (which you will need to switch seasonally), including underclothes, socks, shirt, and pants. **Label all items** and place in a small box. This will be kept in your child's cubby for the year.

Children enrolled in the full day program need sleeping gear for nap time. Each child will need a small pillow and two small blankets, or a sleeping bag. Please place each bedding in a pillowcase, and as all items, please label each item clearly.

Sources: Sun hats and camp type pillows can be found in most department stores or camp outfitters.

Toys and Personal Items

Please, no toys or personal items from home.

A child thrives in an environment of simplicity and beauty. They also absorb the impressions around them. We try to provide the children with toys that foster their imagination and creativity and do not limit their ability to play freely.

Please keep personal toys, books, and other treasures at home. There is the possibility that they will get lost or broken, and may cause awkward situations. It is often difficult for young children to share their personal belongings at school.

Gum, candy, jewelry and make-up **may not** be brought to school.

If items from school such as crystals, stones, shells, little animals, etc, come to your home, do not be alarmed. Simply have your child return them the next day.

Health

The teachers share with you a deep concern for your child's physical and inner health. The best environment for a sick child is resting at home – even if it's "just a cold." **(Germs spread very rapidly, and a coughing or sneezing child can infect an entire class quickly)**

If a child is not well enough to participate in all of the Children's Center activities, including going outdoors, then he/she should remain at home.

If your child has had a fever, please allow him/her to remain at home for 24 hours after the fever has subsided, to permit full recuperation. We suggest that if your child is receiving antibiotics, she/he should stay home a minimum of 3 days to facilitate a healthy recovery. It is important for an ill child to remain in a quiet restful environment so that upon returning to school they are able to fully and joyfully participate in all activities.

Any child who has an infection or communicable disease must remain at home. Please inform the school office if your child has contracted a communicable illness so we may give necessary information to other parents.

Behavior Guidelines in the Early Childhood Center

It is our aim in early childhood to surround the children with a rhythmically consistent, safe and nurturing environment. All teachers strive to be worthy role models so that out of imitation, the children will have an opportunity to become respectful and caring of themselves, others and their surroundings.

When a child's behavior is inappropriate, the teacher may redirect the child by giving him/her a task such as helping out with some of the daily work, washing, cooking painting, or something to occupy their hands.

If at any time the child's behavior is disruptive or harmful to others, it may be necessary to remove the child from the situation. This could range from "time away" (within the classroom, away from the others), to having to remain in during recess with a teacher, (to help...), or more seriously the requirement of a "home day."

If the behavior continues to be inappropriate, a parent-teacher conversation must begin. If the child's behavior does not improve or remain healthy for the child and/or others, the child will need to remain at home. At this point it may need to be determined whether the child's further participation is in the best interest of the child and the class.

The safety and well being of the children is of paramount importance. It is basic to the nurturing, caring environment we strive to provide. Though it is the nature of children to test the protective arms we spread around them, they will not be permitted to go beyond these loving, safeguarding arms.

Recommended Reading

Child Development

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge – Barbara Patterson

Work and Play in Early Childhood - Freja Jaffke

Children at Play - Heidi Britz

Incarnating Child - Joan Salter

Childhood - Caroline von Heidebrand

A Guide to Child Health - M. Glockler & W. Goebel

Summer Children - J. Uphoff, J. Gilmore, R. Huber

Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk - David Elkind

The Hurried Child - David Elkind

The First Seven Years - (Physiology of Childhood) - Edmond Schoorel

Recovery of Man in Childhood - A.C. Harwood

Parenting and Rhythmical Family Life

Adventures in Parenting – Rachel C. Ross

The Spiritual Task of the Homemaker – Manfred Schmidt-Brabant

Recovery of Man in Childhood - A.C. Harwood

Lifeways - Working With Family Questions – G. Davey & B. Voors

More Lifeways - P. Smith & S. Eklund Schaefer

The Children's Year - S. Cooper, C. Frynes, C. & M. Rowling

Festivals Family and Food – D. Carey & J. Large

Six-Point Plan for Raising Happy Healthy Children - John Rosemond

You are Your Child's First Teacher – Rahima Baldwin

Heaven on Earth - Sharifa Oppenheimer

Covering Home - Jack Petrach

Seven Times the Sun-Guiding Your Child Trough the

Rhythms of the Day – Shea Darian

Effects of Media

The Plug in Drug - Marie Wimm

Who's Bringing Them Up? - Martin Large

Endangered Minds-Why Children Can't Read - J. Healy

A is for Ox - The Collapse of Literacy and the Rise of Violence in an Electronic Age - Sanders

Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television- Jerry Mander

The Evil Eye: The Unacceptable Face of Television - Guy Lyon

The Child and the Machine – Alison Armstrong & Charles Casement