

Dear Parents,

We would like to welcome you to the “Wildwood Family”!

Our “hobbit house” school is nestled among beaver ponds, willows and evergreens on several acres of White River National Forest Land. Our natural setting opens the door for our unique environmental arts program. We stress a very hands-on approach to learning, including varied nature hikes in the summer; gardening in our Grow Dome, and animal tracking on snowshoes in the winter. With the Younger and Older Pre-K Domes, there is a continuous flow in the child’s learning, with the program building on basic steps towards kindergarten readiness including social-emotional preparedness.

Our program centers on the emotional, social, physical, self-help and academic development of the child. Using monthly, environmentally centered themes, we integrate all our teaching; natural awareness; science; music, dance, arts, drama, mathematics, language arts, reading, and skill work. Through experience based learning, we try to help the children gain confidence in themselves and the world around them with a strong excitement and zest for learning. There are many opportunities throughout the school day for the younger children to mingle with the older children. We have found that all ages benefit from this experience as the children grow in their ability to form friendships and in their readiness to accept new responsibilities and greater independence.

We provide bus service to and from the school from the Aspen downtown area at no additional charge. Our friendly yellow school bus allows us the ability to travel the valley, and experience all that our community has to offer. When hands-on learning is a goal, the ability to access a myriad of experiences is key to a successful education. We plan special field trips monthly, and make regular trips to the library and A.C.E.S. Additional optional programs that we offer for a minimal charge include gymnastics; swim lessons; and downhill skiing. We offer snowshoeing and sledding at the school during the winter months.

Our top notched staff is educated and experienced in early childhood education, in addition to environmental education. The directors have been employed at Wildwood for a combined total of over five decades! Each teacher brings his or her own expertise and energy to help provide the high quality program Wildwood has given the valley for 41 years. We understand that preschoolers thrive on guidance from, as well as interaction with, their caretakers. Response to their conversation and actions helps them develop language skills as well as increase their understanding of the world. As such, we are committed to low teacher/child ratios, we exceed the ratio/group size recommendation by NAEYC. In the Younger dome we keep a (4 to 6) child ratio per teacher and in the Older dome we keep a (6 to 7) child ratio per teacher.

We schedule parent-teacher pre-conferences in the fall as an opportunity to touch base and map out what we hope to accomplish over the course of the school year, as well as try to answer any questions you may have.

Together we will formulate “Individual Learning Plans” for each child. In the spring, we meet again with parents for an in-depth and thorough reflection on your child’s growth

and development over the school year. The staff work extra hard over many months as they, along with each child, work to create a captivating and thorough portfolio reflecting at every turn your child's experience at Wildwood over the course of the school year. We like to stress that our partnership with you is an integral component regarding your child's experience at Wildwood School as well. To further this end if any family requires this document or any other information from Wildwood School, including discussion regarding the development of a child, be interpreted into their home language, we will take steps to accommodate the request. We are excited to have current staff member Miss Rocio Veronica Rojas-Eroh available to assist with any of our Spanish-speaking language needs.

The Wildwood School has been recognized as being an "Eco-Healthy" facility by The Eco-Healthy Child Care (EHCC) program. In 2008, the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education presented Wildwood School with the "Non-Profit Award for Excellence in Environmental Education". Tina Person is a "Certified Environmental Educator" and was recently granted a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Four members of our staff are currently Director Qualified by the State of Colorado, with several others closely behind!

In 2005, the City of Aspen recognized The Wildwood School as a "Green Tree Business" for practicing exemplary environmental stewardship through: conscientious purchasing; conservation; green building; recycling; toxic materials awareness; and other unique efforts.

In support of the UN International Year of Mountains 2002, the Aspen International Mountain Foundation and the Aspen Institute recognized The Wildwood School for its contributions to a healthy and sustainable mountain environment that same year.

The Wildwood School building is unique and has received a Colorado Association of Architect's Award. As part of the International Year of the Child in 1979, Wildwood School was selected by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as one of 18 projects throughout the nation which most embodied the spirit of the United Nations in its world-wide commitment to children and their needs. We are proud of our legacy, and eager to advance our focus of children and nature into the future!

We take our environmental-arts focus very seriously, and ask that if you have any ideas or areas of expertise to contribute to our program, we would highly appreciate your input. Our current program is the reflection of the many talented, bright, creative, thoughtful, ingenious, knowledgeable and daring souls that have passed through these walls in the previous four decades to be sure!

We feel it is essential to involve the whole family in our program. In the fall we schedule home visits as a means to form bonds from the start. We offer many opportunities for the parents and siblings to be a part of our program: Parent-Teacher Conferences both in the fall and in the spring; Open houses, Parent meetings; a fall "Welcome Party"; home visits; Holiday Plays and Parties, Wildwood World Cup Ski Race and Picnic, Wildwood School Dinner Dance and Silent Auction, "Earth Day" Parties; Graduation, Dome Tea Parties and Events, Summer Fiesta Party, Ducky Derby booth, Saturday Market booth, parades, workshops, and a daily open campus for parent volunteers. We want to make the whole family a part of the child's first learning experience!

Wildwood Philosophy

By using a monthly theme approach the children at Wildwood School are being continuously challenged by specific learning goals we have set for them.

- In order to begin to read and perform other academic tasks, the children must first gather meaning from the world and develop an awareness of concepts.
- In order to gather meaning from the world, children must have many satisfying sensory and interactive experiences – they must touch, feel, smell, hear and see. Perceptual development follows. As children interpret their sensory experiences, their minds continue to develop and expand.
- Our environmental arts curriculum coupled with our wondrous mountain setting amidst beaver ponds, nature trails and forests of pine and willows, beg the children to explore and experience nature and animals at the doorstep.

With a daily pupil – teacher ratio of 7 to 1, we accomplish these goals by focusing on five basic developmental areas:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social
- Communication
- Readiness Skills (Academic)

The program we pursue is geared toward helping children develop habits of observation and discovery, questioning, listening and problem solving. Enveloped in an environment of fun where they feel loved and respected they develop an awareness of the uniqueness of who they are and how to express their feelings. They learn that they are free to make choices and that as long as they stay within the limits of consideration for people and things, they do not always have to conform. An open-ended program like ours prepares children to utilize their intellectual and creative abilities in future learning tasks, and in successfully relating to the world and fellow mankind.

Wildwood Mission Statement

The mission of the Wildwood School is to create a happy, caring and nurturing preschool dedicated to environmental exploration and artistic expression.

We promote the children's experiential learning, social interaction, and positive self-concept.

We strive to provide a meaningful first-learning experience for the children, their parents, the staff and the community.

We Believe

- Children are our most precious resource and deserve to be cherished.

- Children mature at their own pace and that their individualism must be respected and valued.
- Children need to play and explore, while the adults act as facilitators. It is the process that counts, not the product.
- Children will find our environmental arts program engaging, fun, and informative. We strive to offer a curriculum that is developmentally sound and relevant.
- In respecting teachers and the Early Childhood Teaching profession.
- That diversity and respect for all cultures and heritages should be promoted.
- In respecting and protecting the beautiful environment around us, and setting an example of appreciation and care that the children can follow.
- It is in the children's best interest to have teachers, parents, and the community all work together on the child's behalf. The concept of "The Wildwood Family" is very important to us.
- Our commitment to a low teacher-student ration and a high caliber teaching staff enables us to strive for excellence in preschool education.

Daily Schedule Wildwood School offers a full day program for children ages 2 ½ to 5 years old, which extends from 8:30am to 4:00pm. The school bus will be at Koch Park (located on West Cooper, between Garmisch and 1st Street) at 8:30am and will leave promptly at 8:45am. Please check your child in on the sign in sheet with a teacher at the bus and place your child on the bus immediately upon arrival at the bus stop. If you miss the bus in the morning, it will be necessary for you to bring your child to the school, but please call first, just in case we are out and about on a field trip. The bus will return to the bus stop at Koch Park at 3:45 pm and will remain there until 4:00pm.

Late Policy. If you are unable to pick up your child, he or she will automatically be taken back up to school, and you will be charged accordingly. The rate is \$15.00 for every 15 minutes you are late, paid directly to the teacher in charge.

Sign In and Out Policy There will be a clipboard at the bus for authorized persons to sign in when the child arrives in the morning and sign out when the child is picked up on a daily basis. It is imperative that this procedure be followed every day, as this is a Colorado State requirement. In addition, all visitors to the school must sign in our log book upon entering the school.

Attendance Policy Your child is enrolled in Wildwood School from 2 to 5 days per week. The Wildwood School year runs from August 25, 2016, through June 2, 2017, and make up days **may be** offered, **space permitting**, according to the following schedule: if your child comes 4 days per week, he or she may, space permitting, receive up to a maximum of 4 make-up days per school year; 3 days per week = a maximum of 3 make-up days per school year; 2 days per week = a maximum of 2 make-up days per school year. Please note that you are not charged for the holiday vacation or one-week spring vacation break. To use a make-up day, please call the school after 9:00am that day so we can check attendance numbers to insure our quality ratios are met. If the attendance number is acceptable, you may bring your child to the school for the day. Please do not call ahead or bring children to the bus.

We cannot deduct from the monthly tuition payment for days missed. Please call the Director at the school with any further questions you may have regarding the attendance policy.

Tuition Policy You are enrolling your child for the 2016-17 nine-month school year. It must be understood that students are enrolled for the entire year, and no deduction or remission of fees can be allowed by the school for absence, withdrawal or dismissal. We want to stress that we offer a quality preschool experience in which premium ratios are consistently maintained. We believe that it is important that teachers have an opportunity for growth and development including attending conferences and having professional work days. We also find it important that the staff receive a steady and fair salary they can count on over the course of the school year. Maintaining a stable enrollment over the course of the year is paramount to these goals, and we appreciate your support in our efforts and goals.

If it should become necessary for you to remove your child from Wildwood School, 30 days notice is required and every effort will be made to fill the vacancy created. Tuition must continue to be paid until a new student fills the space. The tuition for the 2016-17 school year is **\$66.50 per day (please note that this rate reflects the discounted rate of cash/check payment; otherwise, the regular rate is \$68.16)**, and upon paying first and last month up front you will be billed on a monthly basis. Enclosed is your tuition schedule and enrollment contract. Please sign the contract, make a copy for yourself, and send a signed copy back to the school. Please note that all accounts must be kept current. Any account past due will accrue interest at 21% annum from the date due until paid. Any account past due may be turned over to a collection agency or attorney for collection including reasonable attorney's fees. Any account 30 days past due will result in temporary dismissal of the student until the account is brought current.

Snow Day Policy Wildwood School follows the Aspen Public Schools in relation to school closures due to inclement weather conditions. **Any school closings will be announced on the answering machine up at school no later than 7:00 am. Please sign up for "Pitkin Alert" to receive direct notification of school closures.**

Parent Participation We work hard each year to provide a high caliber of early childhood education for each and every child at Wildwood School, and we believe that parent involvement is a crucial factor in this quality education. We provide many opportunities for you to get involved with your child's education, and we welcome any new ideas you may have.

Every school year each family is asked to make a \$100.00 "parent work fee" payment to Wildwood School upon enrolling their child. If desired you can "work off" these monies at the rate of \$10.00/hour during the school year. Activities would include parent workdays; special talents; helping with the children; field trips; fund raising and special events; washing sleeping bags. You will be responsible for logging your hours in a folder in each classroom. You may also simply make a donation to the school. With this assistance, you help form a special school/family partnership that further enriches your child's Wildwood experience. As always, we *appreciate* your support.

Because we are a non-profit school attempting to keep our tuition costs competitive, fund raising becomes an important variable in our annual budget. We ask that each family become involved with at least one fund raising venture during the school year. Please call the school and find out how you can help. Our biggest fund raiser of the year will be our Dinner Dance and Silent Auction" in the spring, and we encourage all families to purchase and/or sell at least 4 tickets to this event.

Yearly Schedule Wildwood School begins its 2016-17 school year on Thursday, August 25, 2016, and the last day of school for children will be Friday, June 2, 2017. Since Wildwood School offers a predominantly preschool program, it generally follows as closely as possible the vacation schedule of the public school system and other preschool and private schools in the area.

Vacation Breaks Wildwood School is closed for two weeks over the winter holidays, as well as one week during Spring Break. Please note that you are not charged for either of these breaks in your tuition payments. Individual teachers may be approached for interest in private babysitting jobs during these times if desired.

Tuition rates are calculated by the total number of billable days in the school year and divided by 9. This enables you to anticipate the same monthly payments.

Enrollment Forms With this letter we are sending you the required forms for enrollment. All forms should be returned to the school by Friday, July 1, 2016, along with your first and last month's tuition; a one-time enrollment fee of \$30.00; \$37.00 for the purchase of your child's sleeping bag and waterproof bag; a yearly program supply fee of \$75.00, a Wildwood Yearbook fee of \$30.00 and the \$100 parent work fee. If this presents a financial hardship, please call Becky at the school as soon as possible.

The required forms are:

1. **Child's Intake Record**
2. **Child's Medical Statement and screenings (signed by a physician) *Please Note: information on a doctor as well as a dentist contact must be provided.***
3. **Enrollment Contract (signed)**
4. **Statement of Authorization (Wildwood)**
5. **Current Phone Nos., Address, and Email info * please call the school if these should change during the school year.**
6. **Colorado Dept. of Health Certificate of Immunization (signed by a physician)****
7. **Signed Handbook Agreement Letter**
8. **Photo Release Sheet**
9. **Sunscreen/Bug Spray Sheet**

Orientation Days and First Day of School

We will be conducting an Orientation Hour up at Wildwood School on Wednesday, August 24, from 9 to 10:00 am. for the Pre-K Older dome, and from 10:30 to 11:30 am for the Younger dome.

We are excited to have parents and children join us up at Wildwood for this introduction to our school and our program. You will have an opportunity to meet all of the staff; explore our grounds; and learn more about our offerings!

School will begin this year on Thursday, August 25, 2016 with regular bus service to and from the school!

Snacks Wildwood School will offer a nutritious snack to the children twice a day, in the morning and afternoon. We stress snacks that are fresh; organic; pesticide-free; antibiotic-free; with no trans-fats. We offer organic low-fat milk and water as drink choices. We like to introduce children to ethnic flavors from around the world, and we welcome you to share with us any tempting recipes that you may have had success with. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WILDWOOD IS A NUT-FREE SCHOOL. In accordance with State of Colorado regulations, any food items brought to share with the group must be pre-packaged, store-bought food items.**

Medications Medications must be brought to the bus in the original container with the doctor's prescription order. Over-the-counter non-prescription medications are not permitted unless prescribed by a physician and the signed request is brought in with the medication. A medication permission form will have to be completed and signed **by your physician each time** a medication is prescribed.

We apologize for the inconvenience, but this is a State mandate. Please note the medication permission form enclosed in your packet. You might consider giving a copy to your physician, or making some copies.

Toys Please do not have your children bring any toys from home. It is too easy for them to become lost or broken.

Clothing Please send an extra set of clothes and a pair of slippers complete with your child's name to be kept at school. We will have a lost and found box on the bus as well as out at school. We ask that each child only brings what he/she needs for the day, and takes it home each afternoon as cubby space is limited and some children will be sharing cubbies on alternating days. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Wildwood School will purchase a fleece sleeping bag as well as a waterproof storage bag for each child with your payment of \$37.00. We have found that this procedure works best as it ensures that all blankets fit our mats, as well as store easily in our cubbies. The bags will be sent home to be laundered, and must be returned directly back to school. **Please note there will be a parent sign up sheet in each dome for volunteers to launder the group's bags and return them, which is always greatly appreciated!** These items will be yours to keep at the end of the school year. (If your child has a small blankie he or she "needs" to sleep with, it can be sent to and from school each day in a backpack in addition).

Diapers If your child is still in diapers, please remember to send adequate supplies with your child each day. **Contributions of extra diapers and wet wipes for us to keep on hand are always appreciated.** If your child is toilet training, a reminder to always dress your child in clothing that he or she can easily take off and put back on. We want to help each child be as successful as possible in each attempt.

Child Health Wildwood School will provide opportunities for families to participate in hearing, vision, and dental screenings provided through our nurse consultant at the school. Results and resources for follow up will be provided. Resource for Vision: <http://infantsee.org/> Resource for Oral Health: <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/SpcCol/Oral-Health>

Wildwood School participates in the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System. An important component of Colorado Shines requests that Wildwood document that children enrolled in the program are covered under a health insurance policy, and by signing and dating our enrollment contract you agree to this commitment.

If your child is not currently covered by health insurance, our program will provide you with a local contact for Colorado Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to explore your child's eligibility for coverage.

Illness It is our basic belief that sick children do not belong in school, both for their own welfare as well as for the welfare of others around them. We rely on your cooperation and thank you for your support of our policies.

1. Children **must be fever free for 24 hours** before returning to school.
2. Children **must be on antibiotics for 24 hours** before returning to school
3. **Parent must come within 1 hour of being called to pick up a sick child.**
4. **Parents must complete and sign a medical waiver form for medications to be given at school.**

PARENTS ARE ASKED TO KEEP CHILDREN AT HOME WHEN THE FOLLOWING EXIST:

FEVER: This is an indication that something is wrong. Do not give your child fever medication and bring them to school. Masking a fever may cover up important diagnostic symptoms and expose others to a potentially contagious disease. **We classify a fever as 100 degrees or above.**

DIARRHEA: This is a symptom and not a specific illness. Intestinal problems can be highly contagious. Diarrhea is defined as **multiple runny stools**. Children with diarrhea are uncomfortable and need to be home. **They must remain at home until they are symptom free and have a normal bowel movement.**

COUGHS: Coughs spread germs and should not be present in a child care environment. A cough may indicate infections or a contagious agent. Cough medication often makes children drowsy and unable to engage in normal school activities. Please take the child to your physician before returning to school.

RASHES: Rashes may be a minor allergy or a reaction to an insect bite. However, they may also be caused by chicken pox, impetigo or other bacterial or viral organisms. You must take the child to the doctor if a new rash appears so that we may eliminate the possibility of infectious diseases.

RUNNY NOSES: Like coughs, they spread germs. Like rashes, they may be an indication of an allergy.

However, they may also be caused by a bacterial or viral infection. Please take the child to a doctor. Cold medications may also cause drowsiness or even hyperactivity, which may make children unable to enjoy normal school participation.

BOWEL AND BLADDER PROBLEMS: Constipation can be very upsetting and uncomfortable. Additionally, urinary infections can be very painful and/or contagious. Children must remain at home with these conditions and may return to school when they are comfortable and **symptom free**.

EYE INFECTIONS: There are many forms of “pink eye” or conjunctivitis. Some are very contagious. Children must remain at home for 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment and eyes must be clear.

PAIN: A child that is in any type of pain does not belong in school. Tenderness or pain in the ears, neck, throat, head, back or abdomen can indicate serious illness and should be brought to the attention of a physician.

VOMITING: Nausea is a very unpleasant experience and may indicate a virus or contagious illness. Do not bring a child to school that is feeling “queasy” or has had episodes of vomiting within the last 24 hours.

WEAKNESS: A weak, lethargic, tired or listless child is probably coming down with something and should remain at home to insure their comfort, safety and health.

STREP THROAT: Children diagnosed with strep need to remain at home until they have been on medication for a full 24 hours and feel up to resuming normal school activities.

CHICKEN POX: Children with chicken pox must remain at home until after **all** the pox have scabbed over and feel well enough to participate in school

HEAD LICE: An unpleasant, highly contagious agent. Children **MUST** be shampooed with the medication, be free of all nits and have all materials thoroughly washed before returning to school

UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR: Children who are exhausted, extremely upset, very sad or experiencing general discomfort of a serious nature cannot relax and participate in play activities and should remain at home.

Please follow your gut instinct, as you probably know when a child is just not him/herself. A child who is cranky, irritable, listless, excessively sleepy or unusually clingy is probably getting sick. A child who vomits, has diarrhea; thick green or yellow mucus; red, irritated eyes; a skin rash; fever; constipation; pain or inability to move is probably too sick to be in school. “If in doubt, please keep your child out.”

Control of Communicable Diseases When children have been diagnosed with a communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia, or shigella, Wildwood School must notify the local Health Department or the State Department of Public Health and Environment, all staff members, and all parents and guardians of children in care. Children’s confidentiality must be maintained.

Policy on Aids and Serious Infectious Illnesses Members of the School community (employees, students, parents) with a communicable disease will be allowed to attend school, work, and participate in school activities as long as they are able to perform essential functions of their position and do not present a health or safety risk to themselves or others at Wildwood.

Wildwood complies with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding infectious illnesses. Wildwood School holds all information which it receives about the medical condition of a student or employee in confidence, and the school restricts access to such information to those with a legitimate need for the information as determined by the Director and/or legal authorities.

Discipline Policy Acceptable forms of discipline at Wildwood School are based on natural and logical consequences. As much as possible the discipline should be the natural result of the child's action rather than an enforcement of the staff member's will. We always attempt to explain to the child how their actions have resulted in the situation and consequences. We also model the behaviors we want the children to emulate.

Acceptable forms of discipline are:

1. Distraction
2. Redirection
3. Removal from the situation
4. Time out only to allow the child to gather himself/herself together – never as punishment.
5. Holding in an extreme temper tantrum

An effort is made at the end of a discipline situation to re-establish a positive relationship with the child without undermining the discipline. We are consistent and demonstrate gentle care when following through on our promises.

The following forms of discipline shall NOT be used:

1. Corporal punishment, including but not limited to the following:
 - Striking a child, directly or with any physical object
 - Shaking, shoving, spanking or other forms of aggressive contact
2. Harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading responses of any form, including verbal, emotional and physical.
3. Depriving of food or rest.

Violation of any of the above may result in immediate dismissal.

Child Abuse Reporting Under the "Child Protection Act of 1987" (C.R.S. 19-3-301) in the Colorado Children's Code, child care center workers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The law at 19-3-304 states that if a child care worker has "reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department or local law enforcement agency."

"Abuse" or "child abuse or neglect" means an act or omission in one of the following categories which threatens the health or welfare of a child; skin bruising, bleeding, tissue swelling, or death; any case in which a child is subjected to sexual assault or molestation, sexual exploitation, or prostitution; any case in which a child is in need of services because the child's parents, legal guardian, or custodian fails to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision that a prudent parent would take.

If at any time a staff member reasonably suspects child abuse, it is the responsibility of that staff member to report or to cause a report to be made of this suspicion to the local county department of social or human services at 970-429-2040 or to the police department. It is not the staff's role to investigate suspected abuse—only to report it.

Persons who make a good faith report are immune from civil and criminal liability. Additionally, the law provides for the protection of the identity of the reporting party. Parents should report suspected abuse or child neglect to the Pitkin County Department of Social Services, 0100 Elk Run Dr., Basalt, Colorado 81621 (970-429-2040) or to the police.

Wildwood Grievance Procedure for Parents and Staff If a parent or a staff member has a worry, concern, suggestion, or complaint, we want to address the problem immediately and directly.

Please follow the following procedure:

1. If the problem is simple or minor, please talk directly to the person involved. Talk with an open mind and a willingness to listen and compromise if possible.
2. If the situation does not get resolved at that time, please go to the director. Schedule an appointment and review the problem and what steps you have taken to try to work things out.
3. If the meeting with the director does not solve the problem, the next step is to go to the Wildwood Board of Directors.
4. The Wildwood Board of Directors has the final authority regarding all parent and/or staff differences and disputes.

If a parent or a staff member believes that a Wildwood school policy or procedure is wrong, unfair, or not correct then they need to follow this procedure:

1. Write down the policy or rule or situation that you feel needs to be changed.
2. Write down the reasons you believe there needs to be an adjustment or change in the policy, situation, or regulation.
3. Write down how you would change the policy so that your concerns are addressed. Specifically, what would you do differently and how would you make this policy better?
4. Schedule an appointment with the director to discuss your concerns.
5. If you or the director believes that this is a subject that needs to be reviewed by the Board of Directors, then schedule an appointment and your concerns will be directly addressed.
6. The Wildwood Board of Directors has the final authority regarding all Wildwood School policies.
7. **Any problems not resolved locally, or any suspected licensing violations, can be referred to the Dept. of Human Services, Division of Child Care, 1575 Sherman St., First Floor, Denver, Colorado, 80203-1714, and the phone number is 970-434-7045.**

Lost Children Safety of the children is paramount at Wildwood. In the event of such an incident, the staff will sweep the building; play yards and outside areas. If the child is not

located, we will immediately notify the authorities by calling 911. We will secure the classrooms and building until the authorities arrive.

Disasters and the Child Care Setting Fire and safety drills, including “lockouts” and “lockdowns” are practiced monthly, and bus evacuation drills happen twice a year as well. We participate in fire awareness programs, and the facility conducts a yearly fire inspection. All exits in the school are clearly indicated, and all emergency procedures are outlined in our staff emergency evacuation plan.

In the event of a major disaster, Wildwood School is hooked up with Pitkin Alert to receive such notification. **If there is a warning about adverse weather, road, etc. conditions we may make the determination to call parents to come and pick up children, either at the school; the Koch Park bus stop; or the Yellow Brick gym, within the one-hour time slot required upon notification from the school.** Or if we believe it is in the best interest of everyone to close the school and we cannot reach the parents, we will call the people listed on the Emergency Card. Closing the school for an emergency is a decision made only by the School Directors in conjunction with the Board of Directors.

Hopefully this will never occur, but in the event that we would have to remain with the children overnight or for a prolonged period of time we do have supplies on hand. The Red Cross recommends that in the event of a major disaster—earthquake; attack; hurricane; blizzard; etc. every center should have supplies for 72 hours or 3 days.

Wildwood School has the following supplies on hand: food; flashlights; candles; first aid materials, baggies, blankets, batteries, water etc.

Emergency Preparedness Planning at the Wildwood School

At Wildwood, we believe it is of utmost importance to take any steps that we can to reduce risks, and/or recognize possible risks, while formulating and practicing plans in the event we are confronted with an emergency situation.

WE TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS IN AN ATTEMPT TO MITIGATE POSSIBLE RISKS:

- 1). We fill out building and playground inspection sheets quarterly.
- 2). There are regularly scheduled inspections of the facility by the Aspen Fire Department; the local health department; Apex Security; Alltec; and Tri-County Fire Inspection for the six fire extinguishers maintained at the school and on the school bus. All records are filed in the office at the school.
- 3). Wildwood School maintains current licensing with the Colorado Department of Social Services.
- 4). The school has a regular cleaning schedule with a local cleaning company.
- 5). Wildwood has monthly visits from a paid health nurse consultant, and complies with state immunization requirements; has documented accident and illness policies; and uses standard hand washing procedures.
- 6). Attendance records and sign in sheets for the children are recorded and kept at the school. Visitors to the school are required to sign in and state the reason they are here.
- 7). Pitkin County Alert emails are sent to the school.
- 8). We practice regular school and bus evacuation drills.

- 9). First aid kits, CPR resuscitation masks, and spill clean up kits are available at the school.
- 10). Wildwood School, with the guidance of Hansen Construction, has a 5 year contingency plan in regards to upkeep and safety regarding our building, grounds, and bus.
- 11). We make it a point to know our neighbors (Edgar and Elizabeth Boyles; East of Aspen Caucus), and have their contact information listed with emergency numbers in the office.
- 12). Key vendor numbers and agency numbers are maintained in the office, as well as emergency contact numbers for all children and staff members.
- 13). The bus has regularly scheduled maintenance checks.

PLAN SPECIFICS:

- 1). An emergency may present itself at the school, or “Pitkin Alert” will notify the school or an emergency will present itself at the school.
- 2). The Director will conduct an analysis of the area and identify potential safety hazards, and assign emergency responsibilities to staff members. The Director is responsible for making the decision for a 911 call to indicate the need for assistance. In the Director’s absence, the Assistant Director or designee will oversee the emergency response. The staff person driving the bus that day will be responsible for grabbing the attendance sheets and emergency contact phone numbers. Lead teachers in each of the domes will be responsible for keeping accurate head counts; leading evacuation lines; and grabbing first aid kits and medications as needed. The Director (s) will act as searchers to determine that everyone has left the building, and close any doors or windows as is necessary.
- 3). Emergency instructions and directions will be taken from the local emergency agency in charge, whether on or off campus.
- 4). A bull-horn (to signal a safety concern) and walkie-talkies (to enable and maintain communication) are used by the staff and kept readily available.
- 5). Staff and children will be trained in emergency preparedness, including monthly drills.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION:

Depending on the nature of the emergency, there are 4 types of evacuation procedures noted in the “Standard Response Protocol”:

“Sheltering-in-place” and Lockdown—“Locks, Lights, Out of Sight”

Staff lock doors, turn out the classroom lights and silently and quickly move the children out of sight and into the nook areas of the classroom; take roll; and wait for further instruction.

Lockout—“Secure the Perimeter”

Staff and children are trained to return to the inside of the building; take roll; and proceed as usual.

Evacuation of facility—Movement of children and staff out of the building and relocating them either #1 to the side of the bus in the parking lot, or to #2 the playground area as a back-up location. All belongings should be left behind, and students accounted for. No one will be permitted back into the facility until it is deemed safe.

Evacuation away from the area—If need be, we might be directed to an off-site location by the agency in charge. Possible locations would include #1). The bus stop at Koch Park, or #2). Difficult Campground, or #3). the Yellow Brick Gym. The facility director or designee will notify children's parents of the situation and the pick-up point for the children.

*Our policies and guidelines have been formulated from templates for Child Care Centers, which were developed by the Illinois Emergency Medical Services for Children (a collaborative program between the Illinois Department of Public Health and Loyola University Medical Center).

Fire Drill Procedures

- 1. The signal to leave building will be one continuous bell.**
- 2.** The children will be evacuated using the nearest exit. Exit quickly and do not take coats, backpacks or anything at all. Fire extinguishers are located in the kitchen; in the classrooms; by the front door; and one is also located on the bus. The person driving the bus that day will pick up sign - in sheets for a roll call.
- 3.** The Director (or another assigned staff member) will check the entire area for children who may have remained inside during the evacuation process. All doors will be closed after checking the rooms. The Fire Department will be phoned as necessary.
- 4.** Our meeting point will be out in the bus parking lot. Children will respond to a roll call to determine if anyone is missing. Missing children will be searched for or reported to the Fire Department upon their arrival.
- 5.** After the building is declared safe to reenter, the children and staff will return to normal activities.
- 6.** We will have unannounced practice fire drills during the school year.
- 7.** Emergency evacuations for other disasters will be conducted in a similar manner.

Use the following method with the children:

- 1. STOP** Everyone stops whatever they are doing and puts their hand over their mouth to remind themselves not to talk.
- 2. LOOK** Everyone needs to look at the teacher with their eyes and follow him/her to the door.
- 3. LISTEN** Everyone needs to turn on their listening ears and listen to what the teachers have to say.

Emergency Procedures for Illness or Injury

All emergency telephone numbers are posted by the telephone. Teachers are familiar with the use and location of the First Aid equipment, telephone numbers and fire extinguishers. Our fall staff has all been trained in First Aid and CPR; Universal Precautions, and Medication Administration.

ALWAYS REMEMBER, WHEN IN DOUBT CALL 911.

If a child is seriously ill or injured, bleeding profusely, in great pain or unable to move or get up we will call 911 immediately!

1. At least one adult (teacher) will remain with the injured child at all times. Care is given the child using standard Red Cross guidelines.
2. Another adult (administrator) will call the doctor or the paramedics.
3. The remaining adults will stay with the rest of the class. The staff will take the other children out of the area, away from the injured child and will calm the class and answer questions.
4. The site director and/or designated staff person will call and notify the parents immediately.

The parents will be called promptly and told what has happened and what has been done. We will make a plan to wait for them at school or meet them at the hospital. When necessary, we will give them the name and address of where the paramedics will be taking the child if that is the case.

We will take the Emergency Card on file at Wildwood with us to the hospital as it gives legal medical consent. If possible, one adult will go in the ambulance with the child to provide comfort and security. (This will be an adult with whom the child feels secure.) It is not our policy to drive a child to the hospital or anywhere in our own car.

Miscellaneous Emergency Information

ACCIDENT FORMS Forms are located in the office next to the teacher slots. The original copy is filed in the office and a copy is given to the parent.

MEDICATION FORMS Staff may not administer any medication whatsoever without completing a Medication Administration class, and being designated by our nurse consultant. We will need the original container and a signed form from the physician specifying dosages, times etc. The teacher is to sign the day, date and time the medication was administered as well as the name of the person administering the medication. Please note that no over the counter medications can be given without a prescription from the doctor.

MEDICATION Keep all medication up high and far away from children, and under lock and key. Some will need to be refrigerated. Parents are required to personally hand you the medication and may not just leave it in the cubby, counter or lunch box. Medication must be clearly labeled and always placed in a designated area or lockbox.

ALLERGIES It is very important to know who is allergic to what in your class and in your center. Post all allergies in an obvious place in your classroom. Use the child's

first and last name and list whatever they are allergic to. Substitute teachers need to be shown this list whenever they are in your room. Also post the list in the kitchen area or where food is prepared and served.

VEGETARIANS AND OTHER PREFERENCES There are some families in our schools who do not want their children to eat certain foods or observe certain types of events. It is a good idea to list these specific family preferences on the wall in the classroom as well as in the kitchen and office so that mistakes are not made. Include no meat, no dairy, no field trips, no birthday celebrations or whatever it is that the family specifies.

INTOXICATED PARENTS If a parent is intoxicated or under the influence of something and does not seem quite right, and we are concerned about the safety of (the child), then we may be forced to intervene in regards to not releasing the child. In said case, the director or person in charge will offer to call a friend, someone listed on the Emergency card, or a taxi to come (or the police if the situation warrants it). This type of intervention will always be documented.

Visitors

All new visitors who enter Wildwood School must first go to the office and let the administrators know they are here, and sign in on the Visitation Log at the front of the office. The Log makes it clear that a piece of picture identification may be requested of new visitors, as well as the following information: name; date; address; purpose of visit; and any additional comments.

In addition, there is a stream-lined Parent Visitation Record log book on the counter for parents to sign in their name; date; time in and out; and purpose of visit. Please note that the "Child Sign in and Sign Out" sheets must be signed also when applicable.

Strangers

Safety and security is of utmost importance in a child care center. We realize that we can never be too careful about protecting children.

If we see a new person enter the building, we go up to them right away, introduce ourselves and ask how we can help them. Most people will be there for a reason - to visit the school, to have an interview, to make a delivery, etc. We always investigate and find out who they are and why they are at the school. A simple "Hi, I'm so-and-so. How may I help you?" is typically appropriate.

If a visitor is there to pick up a child and we do not know them personally we check to make sure that the parent has authorized the pick-up, and we may also **ask for a photo ID**. It may be necessary to check the Emergency Card and make sure that person is listed. If the person is listed; the parent has authorized the pick up; and the photo ID matches then we let the child go with the individual. If the person is not on the Emergency Card and we do not have written authorization from the parents, we will call the parents for authorization. If we cannot reach the parents then we will not release the child.

If anyone were to be confronted with an uncooperative person, we are instructed to remain calm and send a coworker to get assistance from the office or from one of the

domes. **When in any danger, potential danger or in doubt about the situation we will dial 911 immediately.**

Wildwood School Policy on Sexual Harrassment

Wildwood School will not tolerate the harassment of any employee or applicant for employment. Sexual harassment is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed at the employee or applicant. It is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Law of 1964. This policy applies to all employees and Board Members, irrespective of their position in the school. Any employee found to have violated this policy will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, including the possibility of termination of employment.

If an employee feels that she/he is being sexually harassed, that employee should notify the Director and/or the President of the Board of Directors. Such matters will be treated as confidentially as possible.

Wildwood School Bus Safety and Behavior Rules

1. Teachers and children should remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
2. Passengers are expected to wear seat belts while the bus is in motion.
3. The bus driver should not be distracted and is ultimately the person in charge on the bus.
4. Objects must not be thrown either inside the bus or out the windows, and heads, arms, and legs must be kept inside the bus at all times.
5. Trash should be thrown away in the trash can, and the bus must not be defaced or damaged in any way.
6. The emergency exits are to be used only in the event of an emergency, or when directed to do so by the bus driver.
7. The driver and/or teachers shall direct traffic on and off the bus. Safe exits are maintained with clear passageways, and jumping off is not permitted when exiting the bus. Parents are discouraged from entering the bus during drop off or pick up times especially as it blocks the traffic flow; we prefer that you let the teachers help to make the transition smoother, and the staff will step in and comfort any children that are having difficulty making the transition from home to school.
8. There will be no loud noise or music while transporting on the bus.
9. There will be no eating or drinking on the bus.
10. The bus driver will oversee the cleaning; maintenance and check lists; as well as operations of the bus, as well as conduct periodic bus evacuations.

Wildwood School Classroom Environments.

Environments matter! They affect how all of us feel each day! Our classrooms are colorful, welcoming, inviting, well-organized, clean and “make sense”. The toys and materials are placed in a logical manner. Each area is labeled. At the beginning of the school year, we take the class around the room and show them where each item belongs. We do this with new children as they enter the classroom, and we give reminders throughout the school year.

Cleanliness is of utmost importance in a child care setting. Maintaining a healthy, germ free environment is our goal. Tabletops are constantly wiped clean. Toys are sanitized; shelves and cubbies wiped and dusted; and dolls, stuffed animals, and dress up clothes are washed regularly.

Our classroom domes offer the child many options. There is a free area where children can help themselves to toys, puzzles, manipulatives and games. We have several nooks for dramatic and small group play. The Older Dome has “Environmental Nooks”: a beach nook; a desert nook; a rain forest nook; and a cave nook. In the Younger dome we have “Sensory Nooks”, including a “sight nook”; a “sound nook”; a “touch and feel” nook; as well as Grandma’s kitchen of smells and tastes. In addition, we have blocks and trucks; a book area for quiet time; dress up areas; and arts and crafts tables.

Transition into the Wildwood Program. Prior to enrollment at the Wildwood School, prospective parents and child will tour the facility, including being introduced to the teachers in the classroom. The director will go over the school philosophy; the routine of the day; important policies; as well as direct the parents to read the Fall Enrollment Packet and call her with any additional questions. Parents are also asked to learn more about the program by visiting the Wildwood web site at www.wildwoodschool.org/home.

Prior to the start of the school year, parents and the child are invited to a one-hour **Orientation** up at the school. All will have an opportunity to become more familiar with the classroom; meet fellow classmates and their parents; and learn more about the teachers and the curriculum offered in the classroom. A key to success in all transitions involves establishing warm relationships and understanding between the staff, parents and children, and our desire is to start this process right away!

Parents and children will also have an opportunity to board the school bus and learn more about the safe transportation of children procedures followed by the school bus drivers.

Parents may transport their child to and from school in their private vehicle if desired until they feel comfortable to have their child ride on their own; parents are also invited to ride the bus with their child as an aid toward being comfortable with the process.

The director and staff will guide parents, and offer tips on making the separation process easier for everyone! We suggest making the drop off “short and sweet”, and clear to everyone (parent, child, teacher). Teachers will help by being quick to not only console a sad child, but to help get them excited to move on with their day by sharing fun activities planned for the day. The domes each distribute monthly calendars in advance so that parents are also able to help with the transition by knowing what is scheduled to help that day.

Parents are free to call the school to check on the status of their child, and the teachers will often call to report back as well; all are ensured a call if we are unable to distract an upset child within a reasonable amount of time. Children starting school are encouraged to bring a picture of the family to share at school, and an item of comfort from home if helpful as we want each child to feel safe and secure.

Within the first month of school, Wildwood School also will host a one-hour **Parent Night** (adults only), in which parents learn about the structure of the school year and what to expect over the next nine months. Teachers describe their goals and how they hope to

accomplish them, while parents are free to ask questions and share what is important to them. This event is typically followed with a social event in town as a further aid to relationship building.

Parents enrolling a child into Wildwood are requested to fill out a 3-page "In-Take" form that is shared with the staff. Information includes habits and learning styles of each child and family, prior educational and child care experiences, etc. Parents also fill out a Family Data Sheet indicating which of several opportunities to be involved in a partnership with the school they would prefer. All help ease the transition into being a member of the Wildwood family.

Also in the fall, each child will have a teacher assigned to oversee his/her growth and development over the course of the school year. This staff person will conduct a **home visit** in order to foster a warm relationship and understanding of the child and the family. Parents will attend Parent-Teacher conferences and support the teacher to formulate an "Individual Learning Plan" for their child as they begin their educational journey at the Wildwood School.

Transitions during the school day. There are transitions throughout the school day from one activity to another. The staff works hard with the children to accomplish these transitions by planning for them and giving clear instructions that everyone understands; giving clear 5-minute warnings to the children; by making them fun and developmentally appropriate; and making sure that children can accomplish them without an inordinate amount of wait time.

Helpful support systems offered at school may include a chart of the day's activities so children can feel they understand where they are and what will happen next. We also may have charts indicating the process on accomplishing goals, such as getting dressed for instance.

Transitions to a new classroom or to kindergarten. In the spring, Parent-Teacher conferences will again be held to review the child's growth and development over the course of the school year, as well as to discuss what comes next.

Children advancing on to kindergarten will have an opportunity to **tour the kindergarten facility** with their Wildwood teachers and classmates, and parents are invited to join us as well! We fill out forms for the kindergarten teachers indicating what type of learning environment would suit each child best, and we send copies of our conference forms on to the kindergarten teachers as well. The information gathered on our CPP students is shared with the kindergarten staff as well. The principal of Aspen Elementary comes and spends a morning with us to observe the children in a comfortable environment, and we have worked hard to establish a comfortable environment in which to exchange important information regarding each child.

At Wildwood, we have a "**Move-Up**" day each spring for those children changing classrooms in the fall, so they can become more familiar and thus excited! Children starting school and 2.5 years old will have two years in the Younger dome with the same teachers before moving up to the Pre-K class. In addition, we make every effort to have a teacher move up as well, to help with continuity and familiarity.

Home Visits We believe that education is a collaborative effort between the child, the parents, and the teachers. We want and need parental input and involvement, and desire that parents feel comfortable in their interactions with us.

Trust can only develop by spending time together, getting to know one another, and understanding each other's hopes, perspectives and experiences. A more thorough understanding of the child and family can readily be enhanced with home visits. Home visits can give teachers a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted with the child and family. This may include learning about their concerns, which in turn can help us respond to their needs.

Listed below are some of the areas that might be observed and/or casually addressed during a visit in an attempt to create a smooth transition and insight; feel free to add your own as well! Sometimes the appropriate opportunity might not present itself. The ultimate goal is to establish a warm rapport and open trust with a child and family.

Establishing a solid partnership with a child and his/her family will aid in all aspects of the child's optimum growth and development while enrolled at the school. We are not there to make judgments but rather to come to a greater understanding so we can better support each other.

- How does the family PLAY together? What does the home environment reveal in the way of what is important to the family? (For example, is it filled with all kinds of sports equipment, or rather various musical instruments? What reflections are there of family values?).
- Who is important in the child's life? (For example, are there special pets; step-brothers or sisters? Does Grandma live with them?). What is important to the child? (Is there a special stuffed animal that sleeps on the child's bed every night, one that no one else at school may know about?)
- What are the routines at home for bedtime; mealtime; mornings before coming to school?
- What are the overall dynamics of the family? What are the basic temperaments of the family members? What behaviors are witnessed, and how are they responded to? How does the family problem solve? What works best with the child?
- There might be an opportunity to ask how the parent might like to be involved with us this year (share talents; traditions; hobbies etc.).

Additional Support.

The professional Wildwood staff has been trained and uses Child Find to identify warning signs in social and emotional, physical, developmental delays or concerns, in addition any extenuating circumstances that may be affecting a child's development.

The staff will discuss any issues with the director, and then the parents. If all parties are in agreement to move forward with outside support the directors will put the parent in touch with the appropriate community professional to support the child and family.

Wildwood has access to many community resources such as: information on Food Bank Locations and food drops; Health and Human service resources; mental health clinics; flu shots etc. Please check out the parent bulletin board up at school; flyers; emails and newsletters for up to date information, or ask Becky for information specific to your family need.

Naptime at Wildwood. Nap time is a quiet, relaxing experience. We read stories, play soft music, and rub the backs of young children who tend to go to sleep, or enjoy the comforting experience. Children not napping are not required to stay on their mats for longer than approximately 35 minutes. Other activities are provided for the children.

Snack time. Wildwood School serves two healthy snacks a day, one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. Snacks typically include fresh fruit and/or fresh vegetables. We offer snacks that are low in saturated fats and sugar, and offer nutritional value. We prefer organic foods and avoid foods that have been overly processed; that contain artificial dyes and/or preservatives; or that could have residual hormones or antibiotics. Children are often involved in helping to prepare and bake snack items from scratch.

We do make an effort to educate our families on healthy choices they can make for lunch items for their children. We too have learned a lot from parents with creative ideas, and we welcome you to share those as well! Handouts are sent home periodically. It should be noted that the children are free to regulate what they eat from healthy choices, as well as how much or how little they eat.

The teachers model eating healthy food choices, and we provide an inviting, relaxed environment when eating. The teachers join the children sitting at the table, and everyone engages in friendly conversation.

A reminder that **we are a nut-free school**, and closely monitor all allergies that any of the children may have. As such, we do not have children share their lunches with each other.

We provide drink options of water; milk; and occasionally diluted juice served from small cups. We strongly discourage sippy cups from being sent to school, as they often end up on the floor or with another child sipping on them.

Policy on TV and Videos

The following is the Wildwood School policy regarding watching TV or videos during school:

1. Videos are not part of the Wildwood curriculum
2. When used occasionally, the videos are first screened by the staff, deemed to be pertinent and educational, only used once in a while, and children are ALWAYS given the opportunity to choose another activity.

Volunteers in the Classroom

We request that parents interested in volunteering in the classroom attend one of our training sessions to familiarize yourself with our program and expectations; our schedule; as well as the volunteer's role in the classroom. We will do our best to make your experience with us fun, rewarding, and your function clear and comfortable!

Wildwood School is an Equal Opportunity Program.

Wildwood School is an equal opportunity program as well as employer, and we do not discriminate on the basis of national origin, race, creed, sex or age, or on the basis of a disability.

The Wildwood Program is committed to multicultural education. This means that we share a commitment to human rights, dignity of the individual, and social justice. We strive to create a program that truly reflects the lives of our children, families, staff, and community. By recognizing the impact culture plays on families, we will make every effort to provide culturally responsible child care by affirming human differences and the right of people to make choices about their own lifestyle. We seek to recognize, appreciate, and respect the uniqueness of each child, including those who may have special challenges.

- Recognize the beauty, value, and contribution of each child
- Foster high self-esteem and positive self-concept in children
- Teach children about their own culture
- Introduce children to other cultures
- Provide children with a positive experience exploring similarities and differences
- Encourage children to respect other cultures
- Increase children's ability to talk to and play with people who are different than them
- Help children to be a group member
- Talk about current events regularly with children
- Help children live happily and cooperatively in a diverse world
- Help children notice and do something about unfair behavior

From "Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Settings", Stacey York, Toys 'n Things Press

CONFIDENTIALITY Wildwood School holds all information it receives in regards to children; parents; and employees in confidence. The school keeps the files of information in the office, and the school restricts access to such information to those with a legitimate need for the information as determined by the Director and/or legal authorities, or with consent from the parents or employees.

Scholarships Please note that the City of Aspen, through Kids First, offers tuition assistance to qualified families and should be a first avenue to explore if you are interested in help. Funding for children experiencing multiple possible risk factors may also be available through the Colorado Preschool Program, and families with low income may also qualify under the CCAP program. Please call the office if you are interested in more information regarding these programs.

Wildwood School also offers its own partial scholarship program. If interested, please call the school for more information. **The deadline for application for the Wildwood Scholarship is July 1, 2016.**

Admission Policy Wildwood School admits students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to the students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of

Wildwood School Parent Handbook Policies and Procedures

race, color, sex, national and/or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, scholarships, and loan programs.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at wildwood@rof.net or call the school at 970-925-5678 and speak to Becky Helmus, the Director of Wildwood School, or Tina Person, the Assistant Director, or contact any of our supportive and invaluable Board members.

The Wildwood School board members are listed below:

Board of Directors for 2016-17 School Year

Jennifer Causing	970-948-7189	Lisa Poole	970-331-4363
Blake Hansen	970-274-9963	Margaret Hancock	401-524-4016
Matt Smith	970-618-1645	Margaret Roush	319-389-3027
Jessica Stoller	970-989-3407	Adam Fortier	970-319-8607
Meghan Holmes	970-989-8788	Vanessa Adam	970-618-6270
Susan Stone-Chen	970-379-4451		

OLDER DOME DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00--	ARRIVE AT WILDWOOD / WASH HANDS
9:10--	CIRCLE TIME
9:20-10:40--	FREE CHOICE TIME
10:40-10:50--	TRANSITION ACTIVITIES AND WASH HANDS
10:50—11:05	MORNING SNACK
11:05-12:10--	OUTDOOR PLAY
12:10-1:05--	WASH HANDS, LUNCH, BOOKS AND PLAY
1:05-2:00--	SHARE; STORIES; REST ON MATS
2:05-3:05--	FREE CHOICE TIME
3:05-3:25--	WASH HANDS AND AFTERNOON SNACK
3:25-3:30--	BUS TIME

(Wednesdays: gymnastics 9:45-11:20 am)

*SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO SPORTS, FIELD TRIPS, INCLEMENT WEATHER, SPECIAL EVENTS etc.

YOUNGER DOME DAILY SCHEDULE

9:00-9:15	WASH HANDS AND CIRCLE
9:15-10:35	FREE PLAY AND ACTIVITIES
10:35-11:05--	CLEAN UP AND SNACK
11:05-12:05--	OUTDOOR PLAY
12:05-1:00--	WASH HANDS, LUNCH, BOOKS AND PLAY
1:00-2:00--	BOOKS AND REST TIME
2:00-3:00--	FREE PLAY AND ACTIVITIES
3:00-3:25--	WASH HANDS, AFTERNOON SNACK, & BUS TIME
3:25-3:30--	BUS TIME

(Wednesdays: gymnastics 9:45-11:20 am)

*SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO SPORTS, FIELD TRIPS, INCLEMENT WEATHER, SPECIAL EVENTS etc.

WHY CHILDREN NEED NATURE

“Early childhood is the time when children first learn how to live in the world. Hopefully, it’s also when they fall in love with it.”

By Jim Greenman

We don’t really know how children grow up to be wise. But wise people often have a perspective that includes the natural world. The same thing is true with spirituality. The natural world has always been a source of inspiration, awe, and majesty. If we only provide children with a narrow view and limited experience with nature, will they essentially be diminished, shallow, and deprived of experience that deepens their perspective and place in the world?

When we’re out in the natural world, we have much more of a sense of being physical and much more of a sense of being free. If children don’t have this experience of openness, of feeling their bodies move up and down hills and against the wind when they’re learning what physicality is about, it seems there have to be consequences. What happens to young children if they are constricted in imagination or physicality? Will they bloom later on? Or do they just assume that their piece of the world is always constricted and become comfortable with it, as do animals in a zoo? To develop a sense of yourself as a human being, you need to be outside, feeling like you can run as far as you possible can or gallop for what seems like forever to oversee the world from the top of a hill.

There is a difference between the authentic experience and the managed one, and a dilemma arises when we try to provide nature to children in relatively mannered ways. Consider the experience of the mall. There are trees but no falling leaves or dirt, and never any smells of nature or ways to interact with it. It’s the same situation with indoor parks. And when we create playgrounds for children, we often design an outdoor version of this managed experience. We take such care, for example, to make sure the landscape has very little natural

impact on children. We don't want grass or plots of land that may hide bugs, or trees with leaves or fruits that may get a little messy. We don't want anything unexpected. So, children don't have an authentic experience. I believe that if we raise children without a sense of being part of a natural system, there will be negative consequences to their potential as human beings and to the resources of the world.

As important adults in children's lives, we need to be open to the natural world and the wonder of it, with our own sense of wonder of it, with our own sense of wonder and appreciation. Being open to experience rain on our faces or to why children want to put their noses on the condensation on the window will have a positive impact.

We also have to be more thoughtful about what causes us to restrict children's experiences. This involves thinking about the difference between a mess, an unhealthy mess, and an unsanitary mess (like food on the floor). Dirt is messy, but it isn't unhealthy. Children's digging around and messing around with worms is messy, and it also may not be aesthetic, but it isn't nasty or unsanitary.

We need to problem-solve. Ask the question: "If exposing children to life is important to their growth, what can we do?"

We can grow a plant indoors and out, have gerbils, birds, or fish. Instead of coming up with all the reasons things like these can't be done, we can be persistent. If this is important, we'll find a way. If all we can do is grow beans in class, that's better than not growing beans at all.

To get more natural experiences into children's programs, we also need to consciously connect those experiences with a sense of scientific inquiry. Making toast with a four year old is not just a neat activity that involves doing something for others, it's also a chemistry experiment; and the water table is a scientific place where children do chemistry, physics, and math.

It's true that children who have only organized experiences in nature will probably need permission to mess around and a little help being free. Many expect a playground to be only three pieces of equipment – a swing, slide, and climber. If we don't view outdoor play space as natural and open, we won't give children permission to explore what the world is about. If we can't lie on our backs and look at the patterns of the clouds or the sunlight through the trees, then the children aren't likely to either. Our role modeling is to be open to the natural world, to watch and see if birds come to the bird feeder, appreciate a child busy digging for worms, notice the dandelions pushing up between the cracks in the sidewalk, and delight in children measuring the rainfall or how long their wet footprints stay visible. Teaching is being sensitive and making a conscious decision that our programs are going to be laboratories for messy young scientists, indoor and out.

Jim Greenman is vice-president for education and program development at Bright Horizons Family Solutions. He has more than 25 years of experience as a child-care administrator; researcher, instructor, and consultant and has been involved in the design of over 100 child-care projects. Some of his books include Caring Spaces, Learning Places: Children's Environments That Work and Places for Childhoods: Making Quality Happen in the Real World (Child Care Information Exchange).

MOVING OUTDOORS WITH BABIES AND OLDER CHILDREN – Jim Greenman

The interesting thing about infants and toddlers is that they use their whole bodies – and they eat the landscape. So the first task is to protect them from eating the landscape and from their lack of experience. They can get hurt because they don't have the know-how to protect themselves. However, we also have to protect them from our adult overprotective instincts.

I would ask: What don't I have to worry about? Can I have authorized puddles with just a little pooling? How can I attract birds without attracting bees? Are there ways to create patterns with sun and shade? Can I position different pieces of colored Plexiglas to create

vistas so children can actually see the world differently? What about outdoor mirrors? With infants and toddlers, you don't have to have a dramatic outdoor setting. Because it's all new to these sensory, motor scientists, you just have to provide different objects, surfaces, and physical sensations for them to explore – a place where they are safe to mess around and adults are comfortable too.

Preschoolers need many materials and objects to create their own patterns, buildings, and experiments, and as much time as possible to do this. There are all sorts of subtle things you can do. You can set up planters and have four- and five-year-olds try planting in this little sunny spot and then try planting in that shady part, saying, "Let's see which plants grow better."

Provide puddles, sand, dirt, and lots of water, things to haul and transport with, such as wheelbarrows and wagons, driftwood, leaves that have fallen from the trees. I'd also provide magnifying glasses, video cameras, microscopes, and tape measures so children could record, calculate, and observe the world more closely. I would juxtapose materials like sand and water.

You don't have to have a park. The best part of one playground was a little 4' x 8' stretch of ground where we put semi-porous rocks with all sorts of pockmarks and holes and some hardy perennials. That little patch became the place where we dug for worms and watched the little bugs that hung out there. It was just a tiny part of the playground, but a world unto itself.

Our job is also to support older children in getting a broader and deeper perspective on time and space. They need to take an aspect of nature that interests them and experience it over a period of time, focusing on changes in the natural world. Activities like these give children freedom to spread out their thinking and allow learning to occur within a wider context and a deeper perspective. – *Jim Greenman*

