



Family Handbook

Wild Oak Preschool is an indoor/outdoor nature-inspired preschool program for children ages 3-5. Wild Oak Preschool is fully licensed with the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care as a home-based Registered Family Childcare program.

This handbook will help to explain our program and our operational policies further. We reserve the right to update this handbook at any time, and we will let families know if we do. Please take a few minutes to become familiar with this information, along with the Enrollment Agreement provided to you. On your Enrollment Agreement, you will be asked to acknowledge your receipt and agreement to the policies outlined in this handbook.

Mission and Values

At Wild Oak Preschool, we offer a stimulating and nurturing environment where children of all abilities, regardless of socio-economic, lifestyle, or cultural background, can grow and learn together in acceptance of one another, and in harmony with their environment. This mission is carried out daily in a small group setting with a specialized curriculum that fosters the child's natural interest in their environment and innate love of learning. At Wild Oak Preschool, we value the importance of the whole child, and their developing character and independence. By nurturing and respecting the individual child's process, confidence is instilled as they embrace their creativity and capabilities.

Program Philosophy

Wild Oak Preschool's program is inspired by many Charlotte Mason values and principles, takes a whole-child approach, and is secular in nature. Our philosophy is based on the belief that children are people too, deserving of respect. Children learn from their natural environments and should be given opportunities to explore, observe, and connect with the natural world each

day. Children of all abilities and backgrounds benefit from an inclusive environment, emphasizing acceptance of individual differences and ability levels. We offer a preschool-structured experience that is rooted in nature and the child's curiosity, not driven by state standards and age-determined expectations, but rather, the child's inherent love of learning and connecting with their environment, indoors and out.

We encourage children to ask questions and wonder about their natural environment, to study and observe the world around them, to search for clues and answers to life's mysteries, and to appreciate and respect the natural world and all its inhabitants. We let the children's interests guide the learning, and offer supporting materials and books to deepen their connections with their world and their learning.

About Your Caregiver

Hello! I'm Heather Paladini and I am the program director at Wild Oak Preschool. My youngest child, Aspen, who is 4, is also a part of Wild Oak Preschool. I have been raising children of my own for 19 years now. Working with children and instilling within them a love of nature has been a lifelong passion of mine. My mother ran a home childcare program throughout my childhood and I have fond memories of those years. I have homeschooling experience with my own children. My educational background is in environmental & earth sciences, and elementary education. I have worked with children in many capacities that weave together early learning and our natural environment. I am truly inspired by Charlotte Mason's philosophies on early childhood with her whole-child approach and nature-inspired learning, and I am excited to bring this into my program to help inspire within your children a passion for learning through books and hands-on experiences and connections with the natural world.

At some point in the future, it is possible we will bring on a substitute teacher who can continue the program in the event I am unable to due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances. That person will go through all the state-required training and certifications prior to joining Wild Oak Preschool, and all families will be notified well in advance and given the opportunity for a family meet and greet.

Learning Environment

At Wild Oak, you will find a cozy, dedicated nature-inspired preschool room set up with centers of various interests to the child. Each of our centers is accessible to the child, so that they can access what they need when they need it. The room is set up so that children can be

independent and make their own choices on what they'd like to work or play with during free time. We have a fully stocked art center, puzzles and various kinds of building blocks, a dollhouse and loose parts, a play kitchen with play food, and dress-up and imaginative play. We have a cozy corner with a little library of seasonal books on rotation and a basket of stuffies, blankets, and pillows. We also have nature and science materials on continual rotation, including magnifying glasses, microscopes, nature touch baskets, and more.

We will spend time weekly in the kitchen preparing healthy snacks for the classroom, as well as ample time outdoors every day as weather and moods permit.

Each day will follow a predictable rhythm which will be posted in the classroom, that also allows for flexibility when needed. Each day will include poetry, stories, music, nature, and art. The daily rhythm will incorporate guided activities and lessons as well as opportunities for free and unstructured play each day, indoors and out.

Mealtimes

Our program provides a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and snack each day. Meals and snacks will always be low-sugar and will include a variety of organic or local fresh produce. The children will participate in food preparation each week. Adults eat with children during mealtimes and set an example for children to follow while engaging in meaningful conversation, songs, and storytelling.

Food Allergies & Restrictions

If your child has food allergies, please be sure to let us know and fill out the appropriate forms for this. If the food allergy is severe, such as a severe nut allergy, we can discuss designating our program a nut-free program to keep everyone safe.

If your child has food restrictions or a specialized diet outside of food allergies, please be sure to disclose and discuss this information upon enrollment so that we can be sensitive to that in our food preparations and meal times and plan accordingly.

You are welcome to send your child with their own breakfast, lunch, and snacks at any time, for any reason.

Hours of Operation

Our program is open from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm, Monday through Thursday.

Our program's daily rhythm flows from 9 am-2:00 pm. We offer the option for earlier dropoff beginning at 8 am for settling in and having breakfast together. We ask that your child is here by 9 am each morning to begin our day together. We allow for pickup through 2:30.

If you need childcare outside of these days and hours, let's have a conversation about what your needs are and see how we might accommodate them.

Holidays and Closures

We will observe the following holidays at Wild Oak Preschool, and will remain closed:

New Years Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day

Any other closures will be notified well in advance, with at least one month's notice, unless due to unforeseen circumstances.

Tuition

Tuition is \$575 per month for full-time enrollment.

This tuition rate is in alignment with what Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care will pay for families who qualify for Employment-Related Day Care payment assistance (ERDC) for Registered Family Childcare, which this program falls under.

Full-time enrollment means that we are available to you from 8 am - 2:30 pm Monday through Thursday. We ask that your child join us by 9 am each morning.

Part-time enrollment is available on a case-by-case basis with a minimum commitment of 3 days per week.

Tuition can be paid monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly, by dividing the monthly rate into your preferred increments. Please be prepared to pay tuition at the beginning of whichever increment you choose, whether it is monthly, bi-weekly, or weekly. This will also be specified on your contract upon enrollment.

Tuition is not subject to adjustment due to illness, absences, and withdrawal from the program with less than 30 days notice. Vacations in weekly increments with 14 day advance notification

can have tuition adjusted. The program does not offer make-up days or substitution days for missed days due to illness, absences, or days the program is closed.

If you qualify for ERDC, you will need to notify DSHS that you have selected Wild Oak Preschool as your provider. We can go over any additional steps together when we have our enrollment meeting.

How to Apply

1. Please schedule a meet and greet and/or play date so you can visit Wild Oak and we can get to know each other.
2. If you'd like to enroll at that time, you will then fill out the Wild Oak Preschool Child Enrollment Form and packet. Submit \$25 enrollment fee.
 - *If enrollment fee is a barrier to you, please let me know and a waiver may be available.*
3. Determine start date and sign contract.
4. Pay tuition by start date.

Upon enrollment into our program, your enrollment fees and signed tuition contract are due. We ask that you give 30-day notice in the event that you plan to withdraw from the program, so that we may plan accordingly and fill the spot. Should your child leave the program earlier than the agreed-upon contract end date, any enrollment fees, and the remaining tuition paid for that month will be forfeited and those funds will be applied toward filling the space we had reserved for your child.

Please Come Prepared for Weather

Families should bring the following items with their child each morning:

- Water bottle
- Full change of clothes, including socks and underwear
- Rain, snow, or winter boots
- Outerwear appropriate for the weather - time will be spent outdoors daily; length of time determined by weather and moods of the day.
 - hat, mittens or gloves, rain suit or rain pants and coat
 - *If you need help acquiring appropriate clothing for wet or winter weather, we can help try and facilitate this for you.*

Label Your Belongings

Please write your child's name on all of their personal belongings. Wild Oak Preschool is not responsible for belongings lost.

Sunscreen

Our teachers will apply Earth Mama or Badger Kids sunscreen on sunny days. A sunscreen consent form will be provided to you in your enrollment packet. If your child has a sensitivity to a particular type of sunscreen, or you would like to provide your own sunscreen, please let us know and indicate on the appropriate form.

Inclement Weather

Please bring appropriate outerwear for your child each day. We plan to spend time outdoors most days unless the weather poses a safety concern. The length of time spent outdoors will vary depending on weather, moods, and comfort levels of the children. I will tend to follow the children's lead on whether they prefer to be indoors or out when it is particularly inclement or extreme weather.

Air Quality

We live in a region where air quality is a concern during wildfire season. I will always follow the AQI guideline recommendations regarding air quality and will not have children outdoors when air quality is above the recommended levels for outdoor activity for young children.

Additionally, we have a high-quality Medify air purifier at Wild Oak Preschool and will use it during operating hours whenever outdoor air quality is out of the "green" zone.

Family Inclusion Policy

You are welcome at our program at any time. If you want to do an extended observation, we ask that you arrange a time with us to avoid any scheduling conflicts or other observers. We also welcome parents to schedule times to come in and do music, yoga, dance, or any other cultural enrichment activities with our class. We also welcome parents, grandparents, and siblings to attend your child's birthday celebration with our class. Please arrange with the teacher prior.

Drop Off & Pick Up

Childcare Licensing requires that you sign your child in and out each day. It is also required that the program shall release a child only to a parent or person named and identified by the parent on the enrollment form. We must ask for identification of any person other than the parent or guardian on the enrollment form if they are picking up a child for the first time.

Arrival time for children is between 8-9 am daily. To help our daily rhythms flow as smoothly as possible, please try to have your child here by 9 am each morning.

Please text us if you running later than 9. Please notify us if you plan to be absent for whatever reason.

Your child's pick-up time shall be designated at the time of enrollment and indicated on your enrollment paperwork. Please do not be later than 2:30 pm for pick-up each day, as this interferes with my older child's school pick-up time.

School Rules & Policies

Please note: State laws make some of these rules mandatory. These regulations are designed with your child's safety and well-being in mind.

Records

Each student will have a file record at Wild Oak Preschool. Your child's file and any personal information regarding your family is confidential. Prior to admission, your child's file must contain the following information completed by the parent or guardian: Current immunization record or exemption form, parent's emergency information, signed parent handbook, and tuition contract.

You must sign your child in and out each day at the time of arrival and the time of departure.

Sick Policy

Your child must remain at home if he/she displays symptoms of illness including: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy, infectious conditions, unusual levels of irritability, etc. Children need to remain at home until they have had a full day (24 hours from the onset of symptoms) of being symptom-free. We need your help in following these guidelines so that we can provide the healthiest environment for all of the children.

If your child becomes ill while under care at Wild Oak and exhibits any of the aforementioned symptoms, you or another guardian on their enrollment form will be notified right away and given a timeframe of one hour to pick up your child so they may rest and recover in the comfort of home until they are symptom-free.

Bathroom Use

Children are expected to use the potty or bathroom more or less independently. A good understanding of your child's bathroom habits and any particular tendencies or concerns will be helpful to know upon enrollment. I am able to offer bathroom assistance if/when needed, after first discussing this with the parents. We have a step stool, regular toilet, and Baby Bjorn kids potty at Wild Oak Preschool. Regular bathroom breaks will be offered and encouraged, and children are welcome to use the bathroom at any time. Handwashing will always be encouraged after bathroom use.

Accidents happen. A full change of clothes should be brought to preschool each day, or left at school for the week/month/however long.

Medication

Any medication you would like us to administer must be brought in the original packaging with dosage instructions and be kept in our medication lock box. Expired medication cannot be administered. Medication forms must be on file.

Screen Time

We have zero screen time in our program. In addition, staff does not use personal phones or other devices during program operating hours, unless they need to communicate with a parent or in case of emergency. The exception to this is music: I have children's playlists I will stream from my phone throughout the day, but the phone screen will not be a focal point and will be on a shelf out of use and sight. To that end, I will have my phone ringer audible in the event a parent needs to contact me during the day while their child is here.

Issues

If a parent has a complaint or other issue, we ask that you schedule a meeting with us directly to resolve the issue. We strive to maintain an open line of communication and create a space where people feel safe to share, and I strive to honor and respect everyone's feelings and lived experiences. We respect the privacy of all our enrolled families and their children and expect parents to uphold this privacy as well.

Photos

We have a photo release form available for you to sign where you will dictate whether photos may be taken of your child. We take these forms and your wishes very seriously. As such, please also refrain from taking photos or posting photos on social media of children in our program, other than your own. From time to time, we may take photos of crafts or other interesting things we've created, built, or studied so that we can share them with parents later. These photos will not include the children.

Please sign the following page to acknowledge that you have read and agree to the terms of the Wild Oak Preschool Family Handbook.



I have read, understand, and agree to the information and terms outlined in the Wild Oak Preschool Family Handbook:

Child's name: _____

Child's name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____