Art of Play
Early Learning Center

Dear Families and Community Partners,

The Art of Play began with a simple belief: childhood deserves to be protected, and children deserve an education that understands them.

Nearly twenty years ago, I saw gaps in what early childhood programs were offering and what children truly needed. Too often, there was too little room for movement, curiosity, creativity, and the meaningful learning that happens through play. I wanted to make a difference—to create a place where children could feel safe, known, and valued while discovering who they are and what they can do. That belief became The Art of Play: A Child Inspired Preschool!

As a mother of four boys, this mission is deeply personal. Through raising my own children and working with families, I have seen how education can miss the needs of children, especially boys whose energy, curiosity, and need for hands-on experiences do not always fit traditional expectations. These concerns reach beyond preschool, but I believe the early years offer us a powerful opportunity to begin differently.

I have spent my career working to turn that belief into something families can count on. Along the way, I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees in early childhood education, achieved Pennsylvania's Keystone STAR 4 designation, received Teacher of the Year recognition, and pursued professional learning and quality recognition that would help me better serve children. Our program also includes a certified Nature Explore outdoor classroom, where children can build, investigate, create, and connect with the natural world. Each accomplishment has mattered because of what it makes possible for the children in our care.

A vision our community helped preserve

In 2025, the future of everything I had worked to build became uncertain. A new interpretation of state regulations left me facing a heartbreaking choice: cut down the trees and remove plants in our certified outdoor classroom, or surrender my child care license. Those trees and plants were part of the learning environment itself. They offered shade, welcomed wildlife, inspired questions, and gave children daily opportunities to discover and care for the living world. Losing them would have changed the heart of The Art of Play.

Then our community stood beside us.



Families, past and present, and early childhood advocates across Pennsylvania spoke up for our program and the importance of nature-based education. Through their advocacy and our continued efforts, the state granted approval for us to preserve our outdoor classroom as it was. Their support helped save something that had taken years to grow.

That experience affirmed how deeply this small program matters. The Art of Play is rooted in a particular place, nearly two decades of relationships, and a learning environment our community fought to protect. It cannot simply be recreated elsewhere. It deserves to be preserved. Today, we are also working with other Pennsylvania organizations to help improve how regulatory bodies understand and approach nature in early education. Our hope is that our experience can help create a better path for other programs and the children they serve.



We are small by design, and the impact is personal.

We know our children closely. We build relationships with their families. What happens here Today, I am inviting individuals, businesses, and community partners to invest in this work. Your support can help us meet immediate needs, stand beside families during difficult seasons, and build a lasting future for The Art of Play.

Thank you for believing in children, in families, and in the possibilities we can create together.



With heartfelt gratitude,

Kris LeBeau, M.Ed.
Founder & Educator
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How your contributions can help



Fill Our Classroom Wish Lists — Every Little Bit Helps

Our wish lists include materials that invite children to imagine, experiment, build, and explore. A contribution toward our classroom wish list helps place meaningful learning opportunities directly into children's hands. Gifts of any size, as well as purchases from our classroom wish lists, help us reach this goal.

Bless a Family Facing Hardship — $1,000 Goal

When a family experiences financial hardship, a child can face losing the familiar teachers, friendships, and routines that bring comfort and stability.

A $1,000 sponsorship would help us provide tuition assistance so a child can continue attending while their family works through a difficult season. This support would be offered privately and with dignity, allowing us to bless a family without disrupting their child's early learning experience.

Help Keep Quality Early Learning Affordable — $6,000 Annual Sponsorship

For years, The Art of Play received Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS Merit Awards, financial support that helped qualifying early learning programs maintain and strengthen their quality. Sadly, this funding ended in 2019.

During the years we received these awards, the funding fully covered our curriculum, learning materials, outdoor classroom, and enrichment experiences. That support made a tremendous difference: we were able to provide those opportunities without raising tuition rates for our families.

We are seeking an annual sponsor, or a group of sponsors, to help replace that former support. A commitment of $6,000 per year, equivalent to $500 per month, would help sustain these essential resources. Our goal is to preserve the quality families trust while avoiding tuition increases. For working parents, that means greater financial breathing room. For children, it means continued access to the experiences that make our program special.

Help Keep Our Outdoor Classroom Thriving — Financial or In-Kind Support

Our outdoor classroom is an important part of our children's daily lives. We are raising funds to complete projects and would welcome support for the following:

- Our playground currently needs concrete work. We would greatly appreciate a concrete contractor, a business willing to contribute materials or labor, or a sponsor who would like to help fund the project.
- We would love to find a company or sponsor who could help us replace our aging wooden swing set with a long-lasting vinyl set for the children to enjoy for years to come.
- Our vison for the future includes a covered makerspace where children can explore, create, and build with open-ended materials throughout the seasons.

These are practical, lasting ways to care for the space our families and advocates helped preserve—a place where children learn and play every day.

Help Bring Our Long-Term Vision to Life

My dream is to grow The Art of Play into a dedicated school building serving preschool to early elementary aged children—a place where our child-inspired, play-based, nature-centered approach can reach more children and continue supporting the way they learn and grow.

I would welcome a conversation with someone who shares this vision and wants to explore a long-term investment or partnership. Whether through property, funding, professional expertise, or meaningful connections, the right partner could help turn years of dedication into a permanent home for this work.

An invitation to be part of our story

We know there are many worthwhile places to give. Thank you for considering ours.

Behind every classroom material, tuition scholarship, and improvement to our learning space is a child who benefits. There is also a parent who feels supported, a family who can breathe a little easier, and a community helping its youngest members grow. Our families and advocates have already shown what is possible when people believe this work is worth protecting. Your support can help carry that belief into the future.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to share more about our program, welcome you for a visit, or discuss a sponsorship that feels meaningful to you.

Ways to Donate



Online Donations

Online donations for any amount are accepted at:

https://venmo.com/u/artofplay

Mail In Donations

Donations of any amount can be made out to and mailed to:

The Art of Play
212 Beaver Dr
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Help Clear our Amazon Wishlist

Amazon Gift Cards in any amount can also be sent to theartofplay@comcast.net