

Natural Start
PRESCHOOL



PARENT HANDBOOK

2019-2020 School Year

Natural Start Preschool
at the South Bellevue Community Center

Preschool Address:

14509 SE Newport Way
Bellevue, WA 98006

Mailing Address:

15600 NE 8th Street, Suite B1 #321
Bellevue, WA 98008

Telephone: (425) 233-4480

Registration Information: (425) 452-4240

Website: www.naturalstartpreschool.com

Natural Start PRESCHOOL



Dear Natural Start Preschool Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! We are excited that you have made the decision to send your child to Natural Start Preschool and we are looking forward to the beginning of the new school year.

This Parent Handbook is designed to answer any questions that you may have about topics such as school closings, illness policies and procedures, tuition information, snack suggestions, what your child needs to bring to preschool each day, and appropriate clothing. **Please take the time to read our Parent Handbook carefully before the start of the school year.** Some important dates are as follows:

TEACHER MEET-AND-GREET

We will be hosting an optional 1-hour Teacher Meet-and-Greet from **11:00am-12:00pm** on the following dates:

- **Thursday, September 5th:** For 2-day and 5-day* students with parent(s)/caregiver(s)
- **Friday, September 6th:** For 3-day and 5-day* students with parent(s)/caregiver(s)
- *Please note that students in the **5-day section** may attend on **either or both** of these days.

This event will take place in your child's classroom and will be a good opportunity for you and your child to meet their teachers, become familiar with their classroom, and get a brief introduction to our daily preschool routine. Although the Teacher Meet-and-Greet is optional, we strongly encourage all families to attend, especially those families whose children are new to our program.

FIRST FULL DAY OF PRESCHOOL (9:00am-12:00pm):

- **Monday, September 9th:** For all students in the 3-day (M/W/F) & 5-day (M-F) sections
- **Tuesday, September 10th:** For all students in the 2-day (Tu/Th) section

If you have any questions before the school year begins, please email our director, Stephanie Hoener, at stephanie@naturalstartpreschool.com. We are looking forward to a fun-filled school year and are excited about getting to know you and your family. Thank you for sharing your child with us and for giving us the opportunity to share our love of nature and learning with them!

Best Wishes,

Stephanie Hoener, N.D., *Preschool Director, Co-Founder, Classroom Assistant*

Kelly Butler, *Business Director, Co-Founder*

and **Natural Start Preschool Staff**

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ABOUT NATURAL START PRESCHOOL

1. Our Mission

The mission of Natural Start Preschool is to provide a high-quality early childhood learning program that meets the developmental needs of preschoolers aged 3-5 while at the same time inspiring them to love and appreciate the world of nature. Our unique nature-based curriculum combines traditional Kindergarten readiness learning with age-appropriate educational activities that are designed to teach children about the natural world, exercise and physical fitness, health and wellness, nutrition, and the importance of experiencing the outdoors.

2. Our Philosophy

At Natural Start Preschool, we believe that nature plays a vital role in the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of young children. Research shows that children who spend time in nature are healthier, can think more clearly, have an easier time paying attention, and have the ability to cope more effectively with stress. Childhood experiences in nature help stimulate children's curiosity and interest in the world around them, and help them grow intellectually in their desire to better understand the world and their place in it.

We believe that children's interactions with the natural world allow for the development of a lifetime of skills. Nature serves as a living classroom for our preschool and provides an ideal environment for children to learn through direct experience and play. Our preschoolers spend time outdoors almost every day, where they can fully engage all their senses in a safe and nurturing environment. On the rare occasions when the weather is too extreme for outdoor exploration, children are able to participate in active play in the gymnasium.

We also believe that children need time to be themselves: children. They need ample opportunities to play, to practice and work out social skills with other children in a safe environment, and to gain self-confidence and self-esteem. We believe that helping children develop a positive self-image and become socially competent is the best foundation for their future. The experience of these early preschool years will last a lifetime.

3. What is a Nature-Based Preschool?

Natural Start Preschool is one of a small but growing number of nature-based preschools in the United States, and the only one of its kind on the Eastside. What makes these preschools unique is their overarching focus on introducing young children to the world of nature and incorporating age-appropriate environmental education methodologies into a traditional preschool curriculum. Ken Finch, the founder of Green Hearts Institute for Nature in Childhood, described the many benefits of nature-focused preschools in the following excerpt from his article, "What is a Nature Preschool?" (For the full article, please see www.greenheartsinc.org/Nature_Preschools.html)

"Since they attend for at least two days per week over at least one full school year, preschool students are assured of far more direct contact time with the outdoors than students receive in nearly any other model of environmental education. In fact, each child enrolled in a nature preschool will usually enjoy hundreds of hours exploring and playing in natural settings during the course of his or her preschool experience.

This approach is more likely to generate life-changing experiences than are shorter, infrequent, cognitive-focused environmental education programs. In addition, nature preschools' loosely-structured, daily outdoor explorations allow the time and opportunity for real discovery and play, as compared to traditional K-12 environmental education lessons that are scheduled, regulated, and confined by schools' curriculum objectives.

The nature preschool model also provides exceptional support for the overall healthy growth and development of children. The daily explorations build valuable skills such as observation, experimentation, and sorting, while allowing for both individual experiences and group sharing. The children's outdoor discoveries also provide great subjects for all manner of artistic and verbal expression, and the daily walks help to establish early habits of physical fitness.

Perhaps most of all, nature preschool students truly learn how to learn –developing the curiosity and joy that should pervade all education, while practicing key social skills such as sharing, waiting one's turn, and following simple directions."

PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Our Curriculum

Natural Start Preschool offers a unique nature-based curriculum that combines traditional Kindergarten readiness learning with appropriate play-based preschool activities. Our curriculum focuses on the whole child by promoting physical, emotional, social, creative, cognitive, and linguistic growth.

At Natural Start Preschool, children learn about nature through direct experience, exploration, and discovery of the world around them. The natural world is a guiding theme in all areas of curriculum, including:

- Science
- Arts and crafts
- Numbers and math activities
- Letters, language and literacy skills
- Social studies
- Music
- Sensory activities
- Dramatic play
- Perceptual and cognitive skills development
- Large and small motor activities
- Exercise and movement
- Block building
- Nutrition education
- Most importantly, daily outdoor exploration and play

Our curriculum also incorporates a variety of learning activities related to health, nutrition, and physical fitness, all of which are designed to educate and inspire children toward a lifetime of good health and wellness. Under the guidance of our preschool director Stephanie Hoener, who is a licensed Naturopathic Physician specializing in pediatrics and family medicine, our students learn about the importance of exercise and physical activity, as well the benefits of eating healthy, nutritious foods. At Natural Start Preschool, we believe that it is never too early to begin teaching children about these fundamental building blocks that are necessary to a vital and healthy lifestyle.

In addition to our program's unique emphasis on environmental education and healthy living, the incorporation of traditional school readiness skills is also accomplished through nature-related and interactive experiences. Working closely with the Bellevue School District's K-12 program, our teachers support children as they develop independence and the necessary skills for Kindergarten readiness and future school success.

2. Facilities

Situated on the grounds of the 39-acre Eastgate Park, the South Bellevue Community Center provides an ideal location for Natural Start Preschool. Children will have daily opportunities to play, have fun, explore the world around them, and experience genuine learning in both indoor and outdoor settings.

Facilities include:

- Hiking trails
- Preschool garden
- Large playground
- Outdoor sports field
- Bright classrooms with views of nature
- Natural areas for daily outdoor exploration and play
- Indoor gym for active play

3. Important Contact Information

Natural Start Preschool: (425) 233-4480 – *For all contacts and inquiries during and outside of school hours*
S. Bellevue Comm. Center: (425) 452-4240 – *For registration and Community Center information only*
Website: www.naturalstartpreschool.com
Stephanie Hoener, Director: stephanie@naturalstartpreschool.com
Preschool Address: 14509 SE Newport Way Bellevue, WA 98006
Mailing Address: 15600 NE 8th Street, Suite B1 #321 Bellevue, WA 98008

4. Parent/Caregiver Involvement

Natural Start Preschool offers many opportunities for parent/caregiver involvement throughout the school year. We believe that parents/caregivers are a child's first and most important teachers, and we therefore provide the option of being actively involved in their child's education by participating in the learning process.

The following list offers some possible suggestions for parent/caregiver involvement opportunities. However, we also encourage you to develop your own ideas for supporting and participating in your child's preschool education.

- a. Volunteering in the classroom and assisting with our preschool day;
- b. Participating in preschool field trips;
- c. Assisting with special family programs and activities;
- d. Sharing knowledge, experiences, and careers with the children when parents/caregivers have expertise related to the weekly curriculum topics;
- e. Sharing any other interests or talents with the children, such as playing a musical instrument, putting on a puppet show, or doing a special crafts project;
- f. Communicating regularly with teachers about their child's progress;
- g. Providing suggestions and constructive feedback on how we can improve our preschool program.

5. Parent/Teacher Communication

We believe that good communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of our students and our preschool. Good parent/teacher communication will ensure that we are able to identify and meet the needs of our students and the expectations of their parents.

In addition to the ongoing dialogue between parents and teachers regarding daily preschool happenings, we will also utilize various other forms of communication to keep parents informed about individual, class, and school news. The following are some of the ways in which we will communicate events, progress, and general news about our students and our preschool:

- a. **Weekly eNewsletters:** These will keep parents informed about their child's classroom activities, events, milestones, classroom needs, and other important information.
- b. **Email:** Preschool staff will use email to relay information to parents about issues such as school closings, reminders for field trips, school news, and announcements for special activities at the preschool. Parents may email the director at any time with questions or concerns.
- c. **Telephone:** All teachers and staff are available to speak with parents by telephone when needed. Parents will be provided with all relevant preschool phone numbers.
- d. **Class Rosters:** Each family will receive a class roster with the names and contact information of preschool students and their families.
- e. **Conferences:** Parents may sign up for one-on-one conferences with their child's teachers to discuss developmental progress and set individual goals.
- f. **Meetings:** Parents may also schedule a meeting with their child's teachers and/or the preschool director at any time during the school year.
- g. **Preschool Events:** Field trips, family activities, and special events will also provide parents with the opportunity to engage in further dialogue with their child's teachers.
- h. **Parent Questions, Suggestions, and Concerns:** We encourage parents to discuss any questions or concerns they may have with their child's teachers and the preschool director. We do ask parents to reserve discussion of more detailed matters for after preschool hours, so that the teachers may ensure the safety of the children during class time and offer their full attention to parent concerns. We encourage parents to share any relevant information concerning their child that will help teachers to better meet that child's needs, such as major changes in a family situation or recent changes in the child's health, behavior, or disposition. We welcome parents to check on their child at any time during the preschool day.

SCHEDULE

1. Hours of Operation

Natural Start Preschool's hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 9:00am-12:00pm. Our preschool year runs from early September through mid-June. We follow the Bellevue School District calendar for holidays, school breaks, and weather-related closings.

2. Classrooms

Natural Start Preschool offers two classrooms at the South Bellevue Community Center:

- 1) **Junior Explorers:** For children ages 3-4 who will be 3 by December 31, 2019
- 2) **Explorers:** For children ages 4-5 who will be 4 by September 1, 2019 (Pre-Kindergarten)

3. Schedule Options

The following schedule options are available:

2-Day Program: Tuesday/Thursday	9:00am-12:00pm
3-Day Program: Monday/Wednesday/Friday	9:00am-12:00pm
5-Day Program: Monday – Friday	9:00am-12:00pm

4. A Typical Day

A typical day at Natural Start Preschool begins at 9:00am when the children arrive for preschool. This is a time when parents can drop off their child in the classroom and help them find their cubby. Goodbyes are supported by the teachers as necessary. We understand that the separation of parent and child can be difficult for both, and we are ready to provide whatever support may be needed.

Our daily preschool routine unfolds in a number of settings with a range of developmentally appropriate activities. A typical schedule is as follows:

9:00-9:10am	Welcome to Preschool <i>Greet teachers and friends, transition into day</i>
9:10-9:50am	Free Choice Time <i>Free play, learning stations, sensory and fine motor activities, arts and crafts, teacher-led small group activities to explore letters and numbers, clean-up</i>
9:50-10:15am	Circle Time <i>Introduction to daily theme, weather, calendar, story, songs, music, movement, science experiments, exploration of natural materials</i>
10:15-10:50am	Snack Time, Clean-Up, Restroom Break, Put On Outerwear
10:50-12:00pm	Outdoor Time <i>Explore, hike, observe and listen, pretend play, exercise, sort, count, discover colors and shapes, play group games, learn about science using natural materials</i>
12:00pm	Preschool Day Ends

5. Holidays and School Closings

Natural Start Preschool follows the Bellevue Public Schools (Bellevue School District) schedule for holidays, school breaks, and weather-related closings (see below for our Inclement Weather Policy).

6. Inclement Weather Policy

Information about weather-related school closures will be communicated to preschool families via email as early in the day as possible.

Natural Start Preschool will follow the Bellevue Public School District schedule for all weather-related closings.

- If Bellevue Public Schools are closed, we will be closed as well.
- If Bellevue Public Schools are operating on a "late start" schedule, our start time will depend on the opening time for the South Bellevue Community Center. In some cases when the access road to SBCC is unsafe or impassable, the community center will remain closed and preschool will not be in session. In all cases of Bellevue Schools operating on a "late start" schedule, we will let families know via email if/when preschool will be open that day.

In the event of inclement weather, you may consult one of the following sources for updated Bellevue School District closure information:

- Local TV / Radio Stations
- **BSD website:** <http://www.bsd405.org>
- **BSD Newsline:** (425) 456-4111
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/bsd405/>
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/TheBSD405>

If you are still uncertain as to whether or not preschool will be in session on any given day, you may get in touch with us directly as follows:

- Call or text our director, Stephanie Hoener, on her personal cell phone.
- Email Stephanie at stephanie@naturalstartpreschool.com

7. 2019-2020 Preschool Year Calendar

Please make note of these important dates:

2019	
Monday, September 2	Labor Day - NO PRESCHOOL
Thursday, September 5	Teacher Meet & Greet, 11:00am-12:00pm (for 2-day & 5-day* students/families)
Friday, September 6	Teacher Meet & Greet, 11:00am-12:00pm (for 3-day & 5-day* students/families)
Monday, September 9	First full day of preschool for all students in the 3-day (M/W/F) & 5-day (M-F) sections
Tuesday, September 10	First full day of preschool for all students in the 2-day (T/Th) section
Friday, October 11	Bellevue School District Professional Development Day – NO PRESCHOOL
Monday, October 21	Fall Field Trip: Kelsey Creek Farm, Bellevue (ALL Explorers students & families)
Tuesday, October 22	Fall Field Trip: Kelsey Creek Farm, Bellevue (ALL Junior Explorers students & families)
Monday, November 11	Veteran’s Day – NO PRESCHOOL
Wednesday, November 20	Harvest Soup Social & Family Hike (3-day & 5-day* students/families)
Thursday, November 21	Harvest Soup Social & Family Hike (2-day & 5-day* students/families)
Thu-Fri, November 28-29	Thanksgiving Break – NO PRESCHOOL
Mon-Tue, December 9-10	Junior Explorers Parent Conferences (during normal preschool hours)
Wed-Thu, December 11-12	Explorers Parent Conferences (during normal preschool hours)
December 23- January 3	Winter Break – NO PRESCHOOL
2020	
Monday, January 6	Preschool Resumes
Monday, January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – NO PRESCHOOL
Monday, January 27	Bellevue School District Professional Development Day – NO PRESCHOOL
February 17-21	Midwinter Break – NO PRESCHOOL
Thursday, March 5	Spring Field Trip for ALL students/families: Puppet Show at Bellevue Youth Theatre
Friday, March 20	Bellevue School District Professional Development Day – NO PRESCHOOL
April 13-17	Spring Break – NO PRESCHOOL
Wednesday, May 6	Mother's Day Tea (3-day & 5-day* students/families)
Thursday, May 7	Mother's Day Tea (2-day & 5-day* students/families)
Week of May 11-15	Take Preschool Class Photos
Wednesday, May 20	Picnic in the Meadow (3-day & 5-day students; <i>optional</i> parent/family attendance)
Thursday, May 21	Picnic in the Meadow (2-day & 5-day students; <i>optional</i> parent/family attendance)
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day – NO PRESCHOOL
Tuesday, June 9	Year-End Potluck & Father's Day Celebration for All Junior Explorers Students/Families
Tuesday, June 9	Last FULL Day of Preschool in Classroom for 2-Day Explorers Students
Thursday, June 11	Year-End Potluck & Father's Day Celebration for All Explorers Students/Families
Thursday, June 11	Last FULL Day of Preschool in Classroom for 2-Day Junior Explorers Students
Friday, June 12	Last FULL Day of Preschool in Classrooms for ALL 3-Day & 5-Day Students

*Families of 5-Day students may attend on either or both days.

PARENT INFORMATION

1. What to Send to Preschool With Your Child

In order to ensure a successful preschool experience for our students, we have put together a list of items that we are asking parents/caregivers to send along with their child **each day they attend preschool**:

1. **A backpack, labeled on the outside with your child's name.** The backpack should be easy for your child to open and close. It should be a standard-size school backpack (NOT a small, decorative "play backpack") that is large enough to hold their snack, water bottle, 8½ x 11" sheet of paper, a change of clothes, rain gear, hat and mittens, and any other personal belongings they may bring from home. We want to make sure your child goes home with everything they bring to preschool, so **please make sure that all items fit inside their backpack!** Also, please assist us by familiarizing your child with the contents of their backpack before preschool begins so that they are able to find needed items by themselves.
2. **A complete change of clothes, to be kept inside your child's backpack.** Please include the following: 1) shirt, 2) pants, 3) underpants, and 4) socks. These items should be placed inside a one-gallon plastic Ziploc bag in case of spilled water or food. **Please label the Ziploc bag with your child's name.**
3. **A healthy, nut-free, low sugar snack for your child.** Due to the growing incidence of food allergies and sensitivities, we ask each family to send along a snack for their individual child every day they attend preschool. Some healthy snack suggestions are provided on the following page. We are a **NUT-FREE** preschool, so please remember to **avoid all nuts and nut products** in the classroom, as some children have life-threatening allergies to them.
4. **A small, filled water bottle, labeled with your child's name.** We request that families send their child to preschool with **WATER ONLY**. Please DO NOT send juice, soda, milk, sports drinks, or any other sugary drinks to school with your child. Milk and juice may be delicious and nutritious for our children to consume, but when they get playing, their bodies will be asking for water!
5. **Appropriate weather-related clothing (see pages 4 and 5 below for further details). IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please label all outerwear, including jackets, boots, hats, mittens, snow pants, and rain pants.
6. **Other:** Except on special occasions, we do not allow children to bring toys to preschool because they can detract from our learning environment. However, your child may bring a special stuffed animal or blanket to use during the first part of class in order to help with separation or anxiety issues. This will be sent back home in your child's backpack at the end of each day.

2. What to Wear to Preschool

"There is no such thing as bad weather – just bad clothes."

As a nature-based preschool, our students go outside almost every day of the year, regardless of the weather, and **spend 60-90 minutes of their preschool day outdoors**. The only exceptions are during thunderstorms, extreme winds, and/or extreme temperature conditions, when we will stay inside the South Bellevue Community Center. Please be aware that even on cold, rainy days, the children will go on hikes and spend time exploring the various natural habitats in our 39-acre park.

As such, **we expect our preschoolers to get dirty as a natural part of their explorations!** Your child should wear durable, washable, seasonally appropriate play clothes at all times. Please do not send your child to preschool in clothing that is for special occasions. Play is important, and we would not want your child to worry if they happen to get dirty or wet.

Below are some guidelines to help you ensure that your child comes to preschool appropriately dressed for outdoor fun.

1. JACKET:

- **During the colder months**, please send your child to preschool every day with either a warm, waterproof winter jacket **with a hood**, **OR** with layers (such as a warm fleece jacket or down vest as an inner layer and a waterproof rain jacket **with a hood** as an outer layer). **In our experience, layers work best** because they allow children to self-regulate their temperature by taking off one of their jackets if they get overheated from playing hard, or else putting on an extra layer if they get cold. The best brands we have found for reliably waterproof children's rain jackets are *Oakwear*, *The North Face*, *REI*, and *LL Bean*. Both *Oakwear* and *Tuffo (Muddy Buddy)* make full-body rain suits that can be especially handy in our rainy northwest climate.
- **During the warmer months**, children should bring appropriate outerwear for the temperature range, such as a light jacket or hooded sweatshirt. A waterproof rain jacket **with a hood** is a MUST on rainy days so that your child stays dry and comfortable.

2. HAT:

- **During the colder months**, please pack a warm winter hat in your child's backpack every day that they attend preschool. Even on sunny mornings, it can be very cold outside and young children are extremely uncomfortable when their head and ears are chilled. Make sure the hat fits comfortably and does not feel "itchy" or "scratchy" to your child while they are wearing it.
- **During the warmer months**, a sun hat or baseball cap can help protect children's eyes and skin when the weather is hot and sunny.

3. MITTENS:

Cold hands are the number-one complaint we hear from our students during Outdoor Time. Therefore, your child should have mittens in their backpack every day that they attend preschool. **NO GLOVES**, please, as they are too difficult for young children to put on by themselves.

- **On cold, WET days**, the types of mittens that work best are the waterproof kind -- with fleece on the inside and nylon on the outside -- that have a zipper for easy on and off. We recommend either the *Head*-brand "Kids' Ski Mittens" (available on Amazon and also at most Costco stores in the fall) and the *Gordini*-brand "Easy-On Mitts for Children and Toddlers" (available on Amazon).
- **On cold, DRY days**, thick fleece mittens tend to work best for young children. (Please note that fleece mittens *by themselves* are NOT WATERPROOF on a rainy day! If a child is wearing fleece mittens and plays with something wet during our Outdoor Time, which they are bound to do, the fleece will soak up water and the child's hands will be even colder than they would be without mittens.)

4. BOOTS AND SHOES:

- **During the wet months**, waterproof hiking shoes, rain boots, or "muck boots" are a MUST for your child's daily outdoor adventures in preschool, as our hiking trails and play areas get very muddy during the rainy months. (**Important**: Rain boots should fit properly and NOT fall off your child's feet while they are running or climbing. Brands such as *Bogs*, *Oakwear*, *Roper*, and *Muck Boots* are the most reliable boots for warmth, water resistance, and proper fit.)
- **On warm, dry days** your child can wear well-fitting sneakers or other closed shoes to preschool. Please note that we do NOT recommend sandals or the "Crocs" type of slip-on shoes with holes, since children become very uncomfortable when they get wood chips or rocks under their feet (which always happens with these types of shoes!).

5. RAIN PANTS:

Rain pants are a must for our year-round outdoor explorations. Rain pants worn over regular pants help children stay warm and comfortable on rainy days, and they keep inner layers dry if a child happens to slip and fall in the mud. Local stores such as REI and Dick's Sporting Goods carry a variety of children's rain pants, as do online stores like Amazon and LL Bean.

6. PANTS/LEGGINGS:

For those children who choose to wear shorts or skirts/dresses to preschool on cooler days, please provide leggings or sweatpants that they can put on before going outside in order to keep their legs warm during our daily Outdoor Time.

7. SUNSCREEN, if any, should be applied before your child arrives at preschool.

For the safety of our other students, a teacher will **not** be able to stay in the classroom with a child who is not properly dressed for going outdoors. If a child does not come to preschool with outdoor clothing that is appropriate for that day, and if we are not able to loan that child the necessary item(s) from our box of spare clothing, we will have to call that child's parent or caregiver and ask them to either bring the appropriate clothing or else pick up their child from preschool at the time the class will be going outdoors.

IMPORTANT NOTE: PLEASE LABEL ALL OUTERWEAR WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME, including jackets, raincoats, boots, hats, mittens, snow pants, and rain pants.

3. Healthy Snack Ideas

Research shows that a healthy body is a necessary component to a child's learning and development. As such, we are providing some nutritionally sound suggestions for healthy, wholesome snacks that parents/caregivers can send along with their child to preschool. Please note that due to the growing incidence of food allergies and sensitivities, we ask each family to provide a snack for their individual child only. **Please remember to AVOID ALL NUTS AND NUT PRODUCTS in the classroom, as some children have life-threatening allergies to them. This includes peanuts, peanut butter, and all tree nuts (almonds, cashews, walnuts, hazelnuts/filberts, etc.). Please read food labels carefully to ensure the absence of nuts before bringing any crackers, cereals, granola bars, or trail mix into the classroom.**

In addition, we ask parents/caregivers to send their child to preschool with a small bottle filled with **WATER ONLY**. Please DO NOT send juice, soda, milk, sports drinks, or any other sugary drinks to preschool with your child.

Here are just a few suggestions for healthy snacks; please feel free to share your ideas with us as well!

- Apple slices
- Sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- Bananas
- Unsweetened whole grain cereal
- Fresh berries
- Dried fruit (raisins, mango, etc.)
- Fruit cup (unsweetened)
- Baby carrots
- Sugar snap peas
- Celery sticks
- Sliced cucumbers
- Edamame (boiled soy beans)
- Cheese and crackers
- Hard-boiled egg (peeled ahead of time)
- Whole grain crackers or rice cakes
- Grapes (sliced in half for very young children)
- Nut-free pretzel mix
- Nut-free granola bar
- String cheese or sliced/cubed cheese
- Yogurt cup or low-sugar squeezable yogurt
- Small whole grain bagel with cream cheese or sunflower butter
- Mini "wraps" (cheese and lunch meat rolled in a tortilla)
- Pita bread triangles with hummus or other bean dips
- Whole grain, low-sugar fruit muffins

4. Birthdays

Birthdays are an exciting and special time for children! When we celebrate birthdays in preschool, we honor each child by giving them a birthday crown, allowing them to be the class "line leader" for the day, singing "Happy Birthday" to them, and acknowledging them in a special way during Circle Time.

Some parents have asked us in the past whether they can send along a treat for the class on the day we celebrate their child's birthday. We are unable to have cupcakes, cake, candy, or other edible treats in the classroom due to the many children who have food allergies and sensitivities. As an alternative, some parents have opted to provide small "goody bags" with a pencil, crayons, coloring book, or small toy for their child to distribute to their classmates in honor of their birthday. This is a *completely optional* practice, but it can be a special way for students to share their birthday celebration with friends from preschool.

Please note that for children whose birthdays are during the summer, they will be celebrated in class toward the end of the preschool year.

5. Field Trips

Natural Start Preschool participates in two field trips during the school year. Field trip dates and additional information will be provided to families as soon as they become available.

The following general guidelines will apply to all Natural Start Preschool field trips. *(For more information, see also the "Field Trips" section under "Safety and Supervision Procedures" below.)*

- a. Parents are responsible for driving their children to and from field trip sites. Prompt arrival and pick-up are crucial for the success of the field trip, so please be on time!
- b. Parents are asked to stay and participate in our field trips. These are special events for the children and they are always excited to be able to share these outings with family members.
- c. There may be some field trips for which we will recommend that other arrangements be made for younger siblings of our preschool students. In some instances, the walk may be too long for little ones, or there may be limits to the number of students allowed at certain field trip sites. We will be sure to inform parents of such restrictions as far in advance as possible.
- d. Backpacks are not necessary on field trips; however, please make sure that your child has a snack and water bottle to take along to the field trip site.

ENROLLMENT

1. General Information

Natural Start Preschool is designed for children whose parents are looking for discovery-based learning and a hands-on approach to education. Children should be prepared for outdoor fun: Except during extreme weather conditions, our students will go outside every day to enjoy 60-90 minutes of both structured and unstructured exploration and play in a natural setting. We believe that children learn by being outdoors – regardless of the weather!

2. Enrollment Requirements

- a. Natural Start Preschool offers two classrooms at the South Bellevue Community Center:
 - 1) **Junior Explorers:** For children ages 3-4 who will be 3 by December 31, 2019
 - 2) **Explorers:** For children ages 4-5 who will be 4 by September 1, 2019 (Pre-Kindergarten)
- b. Children must be toilet-trained and self-sufficient. Please contact our preschool director with questions.
- c. Every child is required to have a physical exam within one year of starting preschool and a corresponding physician's report that is signed and dated by the child's pediatrician.
- d. State law requires that all children be up-to-date with their immunizations upon enrollment. A *Certificate of Immunization Status* must be on file by your child's first day of preschool. If your child is not vaccinated due to personal or religious reasons, we must have a *Certificate of Exemption* on file when preschool begins. Both forms are available on our website. Parents will be notified in the event of an outbreak of illness and asked to keep their child at home until the outbreak has been eradicated.

3. Enrollment Procedures

- a. To register for our program, please stop by the front desk at the South Bellevue Community Center. To check on space availability, you may call the Community Center at (425) 452-4240.
- b. All applicants must submit a completed *Tuition and Fees Agreement* and *City of Bellevue Program Registration* form at the time of enrollment.
- c. New student enrollment is processed on a first-come, first-served basis. A waitlist is maintained by the South Bellevue Community Center when classes are full.

4. Tuition and Fees for the 2019-20 School Year

JUNIOR EXPLORERS: For children ages 3-4 who will be 3 years old by December 31, 2019

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	TUITION <i>Bellevue Resident</i>	TUITION <i>Bellevue Nonresident</i>	ONE-TIME ANNUAL MATERIALS FEE*
2-Day Program (T/Th)	\$318/month	\$383/month	\$160
3-Day Program (M/W/F)	\$435/month	\$522/month	\$185
5-Day Program (M-F)	\$661/month	\$793/month	\$210

*One-time annual Materials Fee is paid directly to Natural Start Preschool and covers the cost of classroom supplies.

EXPLORERS: For children ages 4-5 who will be 4 years old by September 1, 2019 (Pre-Kindergarten)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	TUITION <i>Bellevue Resident</i>	TUITION <i>Bellevue Nonresident</i>	ONE-TIME ANNUAL MATERIALS FEE*
2-Day Program (T/Th)	\$318/month	\$383/month	\$160
3-Day Program (M/W/F)	\$435/month	\$522/month	\$185
5-Day Program (M-F)	\$661/month	\$793/month	\$210

*One-time annual Materials Fee is paid directly to Natural Start Preschool and covers the cost of classroom supplies.

- An annual Registration Fee of \$200 is due at the time of enrollment. \$75 of this Registration Fee is nonrefundable and the remaining \$125 will be applied toward the first month's tuition payment. If a student is withdrawn from Natural Start Preschool before their first month of attendance, the entire \$200 Registration Fee will be nonrefundable.
- The last month's tuition (June) is also due at the time of registration
- Paying the Registration Fee and last month's tuition reserves your child's place in class for the entire school year.
- The last month's tuition can be applied to early withdrawal as long as the *Enrollment Modification or Withdrawal* form is signed and submitted at least 30 days prior to the date of intended withdrawal. Monies paid for the last month's tuition are nonrefundable and can only be applied to the student's final month of attendance.
- The one-time, nonrefundable annual Materials Fee is to be paid directly to Natural Start Preschool on your child's first day of attendance. Payment may be given directly to your child's teacher or to our director in the form of check or cash. Please make checks out to *Natural Start Preschool*.
- Scholarships are available through the City of Bellevue for Bellevue residents. You may download the scholarship application, contact the City directly at (425) 452-6885, or email them at scholarships@bellevuewa.gov for more information.

5. Tuition Payments

- Tuition payments are due monthly, by the 5th day of each calendar month.
- Natural Start Preschool is contracted through the City of Bellevue. Tuition payments and program registration are managed by the South Bellevue Community Center: (425) 452-4240.
- Tuition is based on a ten-month commitment (September-June) and is divided into ten equal monthly payments. The number of days in a month that school is in session does not affect the monthly payment rate, and there are no adjustments in tuition for holidays or days missed. As long as your child is officially enrolled in preschool, tuition is due in full each month, regardless of illness, vacation, school holidays, scheduled breaks, or school closures during the 10-month academic year.
- Mid-month enrollment may be prorated. Please contact the South Bellevue Community Center staff for more information.
- Natural Start Preschool operates on the monies from your monthly tuition fees, and therefore we ask that payments be made on time in order for us to be able to provide a quality experience for your child.

6. Delinquent Payments

- A late charge of \$25 will be applied to any account not paid in full by the due date.
- Tuition payments not received by the 5th day of the month will be considered delinquent. If the account is not brought up to date by the 1st day of the following month, a child may be withdrawn from our program.

7. Withdrawal Policy

- If you choose to withdraw your child from Natural Start Preschool or switch your child from one section to another, you must fill out the *Enrollment Modification or Withdrawal* form, which is available on our website at www.naturalstartpreschool.com.
- This form must be signed by a preschool staff member and submitted to the South Bellevue Community Center **at least 30 days in advance of your child's intended withdrawal or enrollment modification**. The last month's tuition that was paid at the time of enrollment will be applied to the 30-day period after this form is submitted to the South Bellevue Community Center.
- If this form is not signed and submitted at least 30 days in advance of your child's withdrawal or enrollment modification, or if your child is withdrawn from Natural Start Preschool without submitting this signed form, the last month's tuition deposit that was paid at the time of enrollment will not be refunded.

ATTENDANCE

1. Absences

The following guidelines are designed to facilitate communication between parents/caregivers and teachers about children's preschool attendance:

- a. If your child is ill or unable to attend class, please email or text our preschool director, Stephanie Hoener, as soon as possible on the morning of your child's absence.
- b. If your child will be late for preschool, please notify the preschool director ahead of time so that we can make arrangements to accommodate your child's late arrival.
- c. You may also inform us by phone, email, or in person if you know in advance of an upcoming absence or vacation for your child.

2. Arrival Procedures

a. Arrival Time: 9:00am

Classroom doors will open at 9:00am, at which point parents/caregivers may drop off their child in the classroom and have the opportunity to briefly check in with the teachers.

b. Sign-In and Sign-Out

Natural Start Preschool maintains a daily attendance record of all children under our care. Adults will be asked to sign in their child when arriving and sign out their child when departing. Accurate attendance records are vital in the event of an emergency, and therefore we will require families to comply with our sign-in and sign-out procedures. Children will not be permitted to sign themselves in or out of our program.

c. Arrival Location and Procedures

- 1) Parents/caregivers may wait in the lobby outside our classrooms until classroom doors open at 9:00am. Children must be delivered to preschool every day by a parent, caregiver, or other authorized adult over the age of eighteen (18), who will also sign them in. Since it is very important that teachers be aware of a child's arrival or departure, we ask the accompanying adult to get the teacher's attention when their child arrives and leaves, in addition to signing them in and out.
- 2) On certain days, class may begin in a location other than the preschool classroom, such as in the downstairs gym or outdoors. On such occasions, we will post a sign on the door of your child's classroom directing parents to the appropriate location.
- 3) Regardless of the gathering site, all children must be accompanied to and from preschool every day by an authorized adult over the age of eighteen (18). Under no circumstances should children be dropped off at the entrance to the Community Center and allowed to walk to class by themselves.

3. Dismissal Procedures

a. Dismissal Time: 12:00pm Noon

Your child looks forward to your return; therefore, we ask that you pick up your child ***promptly at 12:00pm noon***. Please let us know beforehand if you will need to pick up your child early.

b. Dismissal Location and Procedures

- 1) Unless otherwise noted, dismissal will take place in the lobby outside your child's classroom. On certain days, class may be dismissed in a location other than the preschool classroom, such as in the downstairs gym or outdoors. On such occasions, we will post a sign on the door of your child's classroom directing parents/caregivers to the appropriate location.
- 2) Parents/caregivers are asked to sign out their child before they are dismissed.

- 3) In order to expedite the dismissal process, parents/caregivers are asked to wait for their child in the lobby outside the classroom. Teachers will dismiss students individually as soon as they have been signed out by the adult who is picking them up.
- 4) Parents/caregivers will be able to pick up their child's school work and/or art projects from a folder in the lobby that is labeled with each child's name. In some cases, daily art work and crafts will be sent home on the child's next day of preschool attendance. This will allow time for art projects to dry and/or prevent them from getting wet after preschool on rainy days.
- 5) Natural Start Preschool staff will ensure that children have their backpacks and personal belongings with them at the time they are picked up.
- 6) A teacher will be available to check in with parents/caregivers during and immediately following the 12:00pm dismissal.

c. Late Pick-Up

- 1) **Pickup time is 12:00pm.** Due to after-class staff responsibilities and scheduling requirements, a late pick-up fee of \$5.00 will be incurred for every 10 minutes that a child is picked up past program closing time.
- 2) **If you are running late, please call or text our preschool director on her personal cell phone.**
- 3) If a child has not been picked up within 10 minutes of the preschool's designated closing time, the following procedure will be implemented:
 - a) A staff person will call the child's parent(s) or caregiver(s) at the work, cell, and home phone numbers listed on the *Child Release Form* and the *Health History and Emergency Care Plan*.
 - b) If the child's parent(s) or caregiver(s) cannot be reached, the staff person will call the emergency and/or alternate contacts listed on the *Child Release Form* and the *Health History and Emergency Care Plan*.
 - c) If every effort to reach the child's caregivers has been made and the child has not been picked up, the Bellevue Police may be called for assistance.

d. Release of Children

- 1) A child will be released only to those adults authorized by the parent or caregiver on the *Child Release Form* and "Emergency Contacts" section of the *Health History and Emergency Care Plan*. These forms must be filled out, signed, and turned in to the teachers or director on your child's first day of preschool attendance. All forms must be updated as necessary.
- 2) Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than those adults listed on the *Child Release Form* or "Emergency Contacts" section of the *Health History and Emergency Care Plan* without prior written approval from the child's parent or guardian.
- 3) Should the pick-up person be different than the drop-off person, a valid picture ID (i.e. driver's license) must be shown for the child to be released. This will be cross-referenced with the information on the *Child Release Form* and/or "Emergency Contacts" section of the *Health History and Emergency Care Plan* in order to ensure that this person is authorized to pick up your child.
- 4) Parent/guardian permission must be obtained in writing before all authorized pick-ups.

e. Child Custody Situations

In the event that a non-custodial parent (a parent without custody) arrives to pick up a child, Natural Start Preschool must follow all legal guidelines for child custody situations. Unless a copy of a court order is on file granting permission for the child to be released to their care, it is our policy to NOT release the child to the non-custodial parent. If a non-custodial parent arrives to pick up a child without advanced clearance and written notification from the custodial parent, release of the child will be denied, even if a court order is on file with the preschool.

SAFETY AND SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

1. Insurance

Natural Start Preschool maintains major liability insurance covering all scheduled staff-supervised activities. Children are covered by this insurance when they are participating in activities conducted through Natural Start Preschool. Both before and after preschool hours, while the South Bellevue Community Center maintains property liability, it is the responsibility of the parents/caregivers to ensure their child's safety before and after regularly-scheduled preschool hours.

2. General Safety and Supervision Procedures

The following safety and supervision procedures will be implemented at all times during normal operating hours for Natural Start Preschool at the South Bellevue Community Center:

- a. Natural Start Preschool students will be supervised at all times by responsible adults while indoors and outdoors at the South Bellevue Community Center during normal preschool hours (9:00am-12:00pm).
- b. The supervising adults will be Natural Start Preschool teachers, staff, and/or other adults affiliated with Natural Start Preschool, such as classroom volunteers (e.g. parents/caregivers).
- c. All Natural Start Preschool teachers, staff, volunteers, and other adults working directly with children are required to pass a background check.
- d. For optimal supervision, adult-to-child ratios will be no more than 1:10 for indoor time and no more than 1:8 for outdoor time.
- e. Children will never be left alone or allowed to separate from the group without an adult for any reason.
- f. Natural Start Preschool teachers, staff, and/or classroom volunteers will accompany children to and from all school-related activities at all times. A place for regrouping after activity time will be identified ahead of time and communicated to all Natural Start Preschool students, teachers, staff, and classroom volunteers.
- g. Natural Start Preschool teachers and/or staff will carry cell phones with them at all times during normal preschool hours, including while students are away from the classroom.
- h. Natural Start Preschool teachers and/or staff accompanying students away from the classroom will have emergency contact information with them at all times during normal preschool hours, including children's and parents' names, telephone numbers, local emergency telephone numbers, and emergency contact information for children, parents, teachers and staff.
- i. Each teacher and/or staff person will also have an accurate list of children in attendance each day, including while children are away from the classroom.
- j. A designated preschool teacher and/or staff person will have the responsibility of carrying a first aid kit and other needed supplies while children are away from the classroom, including emergency medications, any medications required by individual preschool students, and a list of potential outdoor allergy concerns for each student.
- k. Natural Start Preschool will have fully-stocked first aid kits and other emergency supplies, both in the classroom and with the preschool staff when the class meets in an alternate location, including outdoors. First aid kits will be restocked following each incident, and contents will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- l. All Natural Start Preschool teachers and staff will stay current with First Aid and CPR training and certification.
- m. Enough staff, including backup personnel, will be in place so that a teacher can accompany a child to the hospital and remain with the child until the parent or caregiver arrives.
- n. Natural Start Preschool teachers and staff will have information with them at all times on the closest emergency medical/dental care facilities, including location, hours, and two routes to the facility (in case one is not accessible).

3. Restroom Breaks

Since the classrooms at the South Bellevue Community Center are not equipped with restrooms, a preschool teacher or staff person will always accompany children to and from the restroom. All individual and group restroom breaks will be supervised by a preschool teacher or staff person. All personnel working directly with NSP students are required to pass a background check.

During normally scheduled restroom breaks, a preschool teacher or staff person will take children to the restroom in small groups. For safety reasons, children will be instructed to leave the stall door open while they use the bathroom. The supervising adult will wait by the sink area until the children are done using the bathroom, and then supervise their hand-washing. If a child needs assistance in the restroom stall, the supervising adult may enter to help, but must leave the stall door open. The supervising adult will accompany the children back to the preschool classroom and then accompany the next group of children to the restroom.

Should one of the children need an additional trip to the restroom, they will be taken to the restroom by either a preschool teacher or staff person. The group restroom procedures outlined above will apply to individual restroom breaks as well.

4. Field Trips

The following safety and supervision procedures will be implemented at all times for all field trips:

- a. Parents are required to accompany their children on all field trips. During field trips, adult supervision of all children at all times is essential. Children will never be left alone or sent ahead of the group for any reason.
- b. All sites for proposed field trips will be visited by a preschool staff member prior to scheduling the field trip for students.
- c. Parents are required to transport their children to and from the field trip sites. Parents will be asked to stay and participate in the field trips. There may be some field trips in which we will recommend that other arrangements be made for the younger siblings of our preschool students.
- d. Safety precautions, the buddy system, positive behavioral expectations, and emergency procedures with children and adults will be reviewed and rehearsed as necessary before each field trip.
- e. The teachers leading the field trip will have children's and parents' names, telephone numbers, and emergency contact information with them at all times. Each teacher will also have an accurate list of children in attendance on the day of the field trip.
- f. A place for regrouping and checkpoints will be identified at each field trip site and communicated to all adult chaperones.
- g. A designated preschool staff person will have the responsibility of carrying a first aid kit and other needed supplies. Required medications, allergy concerns, and nutritional needs will be considered and discussed before the field trip begins.

HEALTH POLICY AND ILLNESS PROCEDURES

1. Health Policy

In any preschool setting, disease and illness can be easily spread due to the large numbers of children, the age of the children, and the number of hours they spend together on a daily basis. Even with adequate hygiene that is practiced regularly, both at home and in the classroom, the personal contact and close interactions between young children and staff are such that germs will be shared on a regular basis.

In order to ensure, as best we can, that illnesses do not spread, we ask that all parents/caregivers keep their child at home when he or she is ill. A sick child who is allowed to come to preschool will be more vulnerable to infection and may not feel well enough to actively participate in our preschool program, including daily outdoor play time. We are concerned with the well-being of all children in our care, and we ask everyone to take appropriate precautions in order to prevent the spread of germs and contagious illnesses.

In order to help minimize exposure and prevent the spread of illness, we have developed the following “Illness Procedures and Guidelines” for staff and parents/caregivers of Natural Start Preschool. We have also developed a list of “Specific Illness Procedures” that will help guide parents and caregivers in making an informed decision about whether or when to send their ill child to preschool. It is to everyone’s advantage if our health policy and illness procedures be respected and adhered to at all time. This will ensure a much healthier environment for the students, families, and staff of Natural Start Preschool.

2. Illness Procedures and Guidelines for Preschool Staff

- a. Should a child become ill at preschool, a preschool staff person will move the child to a quiet, supervised area away from the other children. We will notify the parent, caregiver, or authorized emergency contact and request that necessary arrangements are made for the child to be picked up from preschool.
- b. Parents/caregivers will be contacted by the preschool and asked to pick up their child immediately if the child exhibits any of the following conditions:
 - Fever
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
 - Head lice
 - Skin rashes/lesions
 - Constant and/or profuse nasal drainage
 - Severe or prolonged coughing
 - Any communicable or childhood disease
 - Conditions requiring one-on-one care
- c. Parents/caregivers will be notified immediately if their child has been exposed to an infectious or communicable disease. We will also sanitize the affected child’s classroom.
- d. For the welfare of the other children and staff at Natural Start Preschool, we reserve the right to send a child home upon arrival if they appear to be ill.
- e. Natural Start Preschool reserves the right to determine when a child who has been sick may return to preschool.

3. Illness Procedures and Guidelines for Parents/Caregivers

- a. Parents/caregivers are asked to inform preschool staff if their child has been **exposed** to an illness or disease. This will allow us to prepare for and be alerted to the specific symptoms of that illness or disease.
- b. Parents/caregivers are also asked to inform preschool staff within 24 hours if their child has been **diagnosed** with *any* communicable or childhood diseases (see “Communicable Diseases” below). This will allow us to inform other preschool families of possible symptoms to be aware of in their children.
- c. Parents/caregivers are asked NOT to send their child to preschool when symptoms of illness or disease are present. While we understand that it is neither practical nor realistic to expect that a child be kept at home every time they have a runny nose, it is also impossible for preschool staff to provide one-on-one care for ill children without compromising the care of the other children. Therefore, we have carefully outlined the “Specific Illness Procedures” below to help parents decide whether or not to send their ill child to school.

4. Specific Illness Procedures

- a. **Fever:** A child with a fever will be excluded from care for the remainder of that day. The child's temperature must return to normal (98.6° F) for at least 24 hours before coming back to preschool.
- b. **Vomiting and Diarrhea:** Vomiting and diarrhea illnesses are often quite contagious and should be managed at home. Any child who has vomiting and/or diarrhea while in our care will be sent home from preschool for the remainder of that day and the following day until they have gone 24 hours without any further occurrences.
- c. **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** Any child having eye drainage or pink and itchy eyes will be immediately excluded from our program. Conjunctivitis is highly contagious. Children must be seen by a physician and treated for 24 hours prior to returning to care.
- d. **Head Lice:** Any children suspected or diagnosed with head lice will be excluded from our program until treatment is completed and all nits have been removed. We will also require parents to wash all the child's personal belongings (blankets, coats, hats, stuffed animals, etc.) prior to returning to our program.
- e. **Constant and/or Profuse Nasal Drainage:** Any child having symptoms of an upper respiratory infection (yellow/green mucus, watery eyes, nasal congestion, etc.) will be excluded from our program at our discretion. If the child is diagnosed with an illness that requires antibiotics, the child must be treated for 24 hours before returning to preschool (Strep Throat is an exception that requires 48 hours of treatment before returning to preschool).
- f. **Severe or Prolonged Coughing:** Any child with severe or prolonged coughing will be excluded from attending our program at our discretion. A child who has difficult or rapid breathing, severe coughing with vomiting, or a high-pitched croupy or "whooping" cough will be sent home immediately.
- g. **Skin Rash/Lesions:** Any child having an undiagnosed or contagious skin rash, a lesion that is bleeding or oozing, or persistent itching or scratching of the body or scalp, will be excluded from our program until the problem is diagnosed and/or treated as necessary.

5. Communicable Diseases

Any child having symptoms of a known communicable/childhood disease will be excluded from program participation immediately. These children should be kept at home until a doctor has determined that a) the child does not have a communicable disease, b) the child is no longer contagious, or c) the symptoms have disappeared. In the case of communicable diseases, Natural Start Preschool may request a doctor's note indicating that the child is no longer contagious and can return to preschool. Please report any communicable or contagious diseases to our staff right away so that we may inform the other families.

Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Diphtheria
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Strep Throat
- Scarlet Fever
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Hepatitis
- Pneumonia
- Chicken Pox
- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

MEDICATION PLAN

Medication will only be given with prior **written** consent of the child's parent or legal guardian. Any time medication needs to be administered, we will require parents or guardians to fill out a *Medication Authorization Form*. This form must be completed and on file before the child's first day of school attendance.

1. Nonprescription (Over-the-Counter) Medications

Non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications may be given with **written** permission from the child's parent or guardian through the *Medication Authorization Form*. Over-the-counter medication must be in its original container, with the expiration date on the bottle, and have your child's name written on it. Medication will be administered in accordance with the instructions on the manufacturer's label, unless alternate written instructions for its use are provided by a licensed physician. Any expired or unused portion of the medication will be returned to the child's parents or destroyed.

The following classifications of non-prescription medication can be given with written parent consent, but only at the dose, duration, and method of administration specified on the manufacturer's label:

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Antihistamines
- Non-aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers
- Anti-itching ointments/lotions

A physician's written consent is required for any non-prescription medication not listed above, or if the medication is to be taken differently than specified on the label.

2. Prescription Medications

No child will be given prescription medications without a physician's **written** permission. A *Medication Authorization Form* must be on file that is signed by both the child's parent and physician. Prescription medication must be in its original container and be properly labeled with the child's name, name of the prescribing physician, date the prescription was filled, dosage, duration (start and stop dates), and expiration date of the medicine. Any expired or unused portion of the medication will be returned to the child's parents or destroyed.

3. Emergency Medications

Emergency medications such as Benadryl, "Epi-Pens", and inhalers will also be administered as needed. Emergency medications must be given to the teachers in advance, with a completed *Medication Authorization Form* that is signed by the child's parent and physician. Each parent will be asked to fill out a *Health History and Emergency Care Plan* for their child, in which they should indicate any known or suspected allergies that may necessitate the use of these emergency medications. If a child has been diagnosed with a life-threatening allergy, parents will also be required to fill out an *Emergency Plan for Allergic Reactions* form that must be signed by the child's physician. Any expired or unused portion of the medication will be returned to the child's parents or destroyed.

PLANS AND PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCIES, INJURIES, AND ILLNESSES

1. Emergency Preparedness

Natural Start Preschool will have the following procedures in place at all times in order to prepare for an emergency event:

- a. All preschool staff will stay current with First Aid and CPR training and certification.
- b. Enough staff, including backup personnel, will be in place so that a teacher can accompany a child to the hospital and remain with the child until the parent or caregiver arrives.
- c. The preschool will have fully-stocked first aid kits and other emergency supplies, both in the classroom and with preschool staff when the class meets in an alternate location (e.g. gym, playground, nature trails, field trip sites, etc.). First aid kits will be restocked following each incident, and contents will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- d. Preschool staff will have information on the closest emergency medical/dental care facilities, including location, hours, and two routes to the facility (in case one is not accessible).
- e. Preschool staff will have emergency information and supplies with them at all times, including emergency contacts for children and staff, medication, first aid supplies, and cell phones.
- f. Children and staff will practice fire/evacuation drills regularly, and additionally when new children or staff join the program.
- g. Children and staff will know at least two ways to exit the building.
- h. Emergency equipment at the South Bellevue Community Center will be regularly tested, restocked, or replaced in accordance with City of Bellevue guidelines.
- i. Preschool staff will know of at least two evacuation location sites (one nearby, one farther away) and at least two ways to reach the alternate sites.
- j. Parents/caregivers will be informed of off-site evacuation locations and procedures, and will be given an emergency map showing the route from the preschool to the site, including the address, phone number, cell phone numbers of preschool staff, and other vital information.

2. Emergency Procedures

The following are Natural Start Preschool's emergency procedures:

- a. Natural Start Preschool requires that all paperwork be on file on or before a child's first day of preschool attendance. In the event of an emergency, these forms will provide the preschool with important data such as parent contact information, emergency contacts, authorization for the release of a child to other adults, and health and medical histories. In addition, these forms will give Natural Start Preschool permission to seek emergency medical care should the child require such treatment.
- b. In the event of an emergency, staff members will assess the situation and, if warranted, call 9-1-1. Staff will respond as necessary until emergency help arrives.
- c. Parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately and apprised of the situation.
- d. In the event that we are unable to reach the child's parent or caregiver, we will contact the individual(s) designated as emergency contacts for the child.
- e. If the situation requires professional care, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with the child at all times until family members or authorized emergency contacts have arrived.
- f. If parents have a family emergency that will require their child to be picked up early from preschool, they may call the preschool director at any time during the school day to arrange for pick-up.
- g. In the event of a fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster, Natural Start Preschool will follow the South Bellevue Community Center's evacuation procedures by first getting all of the children and teachers out of the building and then calling 9-1-1. One teacher will contact the parents/caregivers with their cell phone, while the other teacher(s) will be responsible for providing supervision and comfort to the children.

3. Injury Procedures

Due to the active nature of our program, minor injuries, bumps, and bruises will undoubtedly occur. All preschool staff are trained in Basic First Aid and CPR. Staff members will always carry a first aid kit and will be prepared to deal with minor injuries and first aid concerns. The staff will also carry cell phones to aid in communication in the event of an emergency while on the playground or trails.

a. Minor Injury

In the event of a minor injury, the child will be treated with first aid by the preschool staff. The incident will be reported to the parent or caregiver at the end of the day, either verbally or by way of an *Accident and Injury Report Form*. The severity of the injury or incident will dictate whether or not the parent/caregiver will receive an immediate phone call.

b. Serious Injury/Accident

- 1) In the event of a serious injury or accident, staff members will assess the situation and, if warranted, call 9-1-1. Staff will respond as necessary until emergency help arrives.
- 2) Parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately and apprised of the situation.
- 3) In the event that we are unable to reach the child's parent or caregiver, we will contact the individual(s) designated as emergency contacts for the child.
- 4) If the situation requires professional care, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with the child at all times until family members or authorized emergency contacts have arrived.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. General Approach to Preschool Behavior Management

A very important part of the preschool experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, enjoy being with other children, become successful members of a classroom community, and follow the direction of an adult other than their parent. Natural Start Preschool takes a caring and positive approach to behavior management and discipline, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal of discipline is to help children develop self-control and to teach them that each person is responsible for his or her own actions. Our teachers focus on the positive behaviors of the children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible. We find that we can prevent many behavioral problems in preschool by providing direct supervision and guidance, age-appropriate activities, a daily routine with clear boundaries, and caring interactions between teachers and students.

The primary goal of Natural Start Preschool's behavior management policy is to help our students learn to be considerate and respectful toward others and toward their classroom/outdoor environment. Clear and consistent age-appropriate limits are set, and within these limits each child can learn what it is appropriate behavior. Under the guidance of our teachers, children are encouraged to solve as many of their own problems as possible by using words to handle their differences. When a teacher must intervene, age-appropriate and constructive methods of discipline are used. Physical or emotional danger will be grounds for a teacher to intervene immediately. The parents are included in this discipline process so children can see that both parents and teachers reinforce limit setting.

2. Inappropriate and Disruptive Behaviors

Natural Start Preschool must ensure that the play and learning environment for all children is safe, respectful, and provides a positive model of behavior to all of the children within our care. We must also ensure that inappropriate and disruptive behavior is addressed in a timely, consistent, and fair manner for the well-being of each individual child, as well as the group as a whole. Inappropriate and disruptive behavior jeopardizes the safety and well being of our students and detracts from the full benefit of our preschool program. Examples include:

- Infliction of physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self.
- Disrespect toward people and materials provided in the program.
- Consistent disobedience of the rules of the classroom/outdoor areas.
- Consistent refusal to comply with a teacher's instruction or request.
- Verbal or physical threats toward other students and/or staff.
- Verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children.
- Behavior requiring constant attention from the staff.
- Use of profane or abusive language.

3. Procedures for Addressing Inappropriate and Disruptive Behavior

We understand that many preschoolers may use misguided behavior because they have not yet learned what is acceptable in a preschool setting. However, at times a child's behavior may become problematic for others or be disruptive of our classroom environment. We want to assure parents that we will address such behavior immediately by following these guidelines:

1. Teachers will use age-appropriate and constructive methods of discipline, starting with a verbal intervention (which may include modeling of appropriate words and/or actions), possible redirection to a more constructive activity, and/or removing a child from the situation if necessary. If a child exhibits behavior that is violent, dangerous, or abusive toward others, the parent/caregiver will be called and asked to pick up their child immediately.
2. Behavioral issues and concerns are communicated to parents by way of a brief meeting at dismissal time, or via email if parents are not present for pick-up, on the day the behavior occurred. Touching base in this manner will allow the child to be a part of the discussion and solution. Parents are asked to further address the issue with their child at home.

3. If the disruptive behavior persists, or if there seems to be a consistent problem area that needs to be addressed, the classroom Lead Teacher will keep a Behavior Log for two weeks in order to try and identify any particular situations or settings that may be triggering the child's behaviors.
4. Parents will be asked to meet with the child's Lead Teacher and Preschool Director within one week after the Behavior Log has been completed. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss and implement a plan of action for resolving the problematic behavior.
5. This plan of action *may* include a referral for outside professional services and/or assessments (e.g. pediatrician or behavioral specialist). If so, parents must confirm with preschool staff, within one week of the parent-teacher conference, that an appointment with the professional has been made.
6. If the behavioral issues are significant, parents may be asked – during the timeframe in which we are awaiting the appointment or assessment with an outside professional – to either: a) not send their child to preschool, or b) have an adult caregiver or aide stay with their child during preschool hours in order to assist the child with behavior regulation.
7. Every effort will be made to work with the child and their family in resolving problematic behaviors. However, in the rare instances that these problematic behaviors continue even after all possible corrective measures have been implemented, it may be determined that Natural Start Preschool is not a good fit for that child. For the best interests of the child, the preschool program, and the other students, parents may be asked to remove their child from the program.

4. Termination of Enrollment

Termination of a child's enrollment may become necessary if any of the following conditions exist:

- The program cannot meet the child's needs and/or is not a good fit for the child.
- Frequently disruptive behavior by the child requires the teachers' attention for a disproportionate amount of time, thereby jeopardizing the care of other students in the program.
- The child's behavior is adversely affecting the classroom setting and routines.
- The child's behavior endangers the well being of other students, preschool staff, and/or the child engaging in the behavior.
- Parents/guardians do not cooperate with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent-teacher meetings or conferences.
- Parents/guardians are not able or willing to follow through on the corrective action agreed upon at any meeting or conference, within the timeframe provided by the preschool staff.

Natural Start Preschool reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any time if any of the above factors are present. Termination of enrollment is determined by the preschool Director and Lead Teacher and can be made effective immediately.

MANDATED REPORTING

Natural Start Preschool is obligated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation to Child Protective Services or to a local law enforcement agency immediately. (WAC-388-150-480: "When any licensed or certified childcare provider or their employees has reasonable cause to believe that a child [...] has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department as provided in RCW 26.44.040.")

NATURAL START PRESCHOOL STAFF

The goal of Natural Start Preschool's teachers and staff is to create a warm, nurturing learning environment that offers young children daily opportunities to explore nature and provides them with a unique, hands-on learning program designed to build a solid foundation for future school experiences. Our teachers are trained in early childhood education, and all of our preschool staff are certified in First Aid and CPR and have passed a Background Check. In addition, our preschool director is a licensed Naturopathic Physician who brings to the classroom many years of experience in working with young children. Our favorable student/teacher ratios create an environment that allows for individualized attention and provides fun, safe adventures for all of our students.

Stephanie Hoener, N.D.

Preschool Director

Co-Founder

Classroom Assistant

Stephanie is a Naturopathic Physician specializing in pediatrics and family medicine. She graduated from Bastyr University in Seattle and has spent the past 21 years working with children and teaching families about health and nutrition. As one of the co-founders of Natural Start Preschool, Stephanie is passionate about fostering young children's learning and development through age-appropriate curriculum, outdoor exploration and play, and daily interactions with the natural world. She considers it an immense privilege to be able to experience each child's innate sense of wonder and curiosity come alive as they explore the forests and meadow surrounding our preschool, learn about insects and animals, plant seeds in the garden, and discover the other natural habitats of our preschool home. Stephanie lives in Bellevue (where she also grew up!) and is an avid hiker, gardener, and birdwatcher. She has a wonderful 14-year-old son with whom she loves playing football, going to parks, traveling, and sharing a variety of outdoor adventures. In her spare time, she also enjoys reading, knitting, archery, cooking healthy meals, spending time with family and friends, and going on long nature walks.

Kelly Butler

Business Director

Co-Founder

In addition to working with the preschool for the past nine years, Kelly been a small business owner and worked for the federal government as an International Trade Specialist. She has a BA in Business Administration and has completed additional training in child development, child guidance and behavior, and health and safety. She loves the outdoors and has been an avid camper, hiker, cyclist, mountain climber, rock climber, and cross country skier.

Other Classroom Personnel

Natural Start Preschool's lead teachers are trained and certified in Early Childhood Education. Besides our regular lead teachers and assistant teachers, we may occasionally enlist the aid of a substitute teacher. In addition, parent and student volunteers may also be present in the classroom at various times. All classroom personnel must pass a Background Check. Please consult our website for a current listing of our teaching staff.



Thank you for your interest in Natural Start Preschool and for taking the time to read through our Parent Handbook. We hope that the information provided has been helpful in answering your questions and familiarizing you more with our program, philosophy, and policies. If you are the parent/caregiver of a prospective student, we hope this information will prove helpful in determining whether our program will provide you with what you are looking for in a preschool. If you have any further questions or would like to schedule a school tour, please call us or email us!