

PARENT HANDBOOK



 About Us

Thank you for choosing Parkside Playschool for your child's early learning experience! We are thrilled to provide childcare and parenting support for families in Northwest Arkansas.

Our Mission

Our mission is to nurture the next generation by providing children in NWA a loving place to learn and grow.

Core Values

- Integrity
- Respect
- Excellence

Philosophy

Children are incredibly capable

We respect and trust in the child-- from infant to pre-K--as an **initiator**, an **explorer**, and a **self-learner**.

Emotional regulation is developing from birth

We provide the environment, the nourishment, and the loving, trusting relationships for this to happen.

Intention makes the difference

We prioritize the Parent-Caregiver relationship and work with families as partners in care. Our classroom environments are child-centered, clean, and inviting so true learning can occur.

Parkside is Particular- Our Promise to Families

We will not settle for less than exceptional care. We will continually educate ourselves and stay connected to our parents and community to provide the most relevant and research-based care possible.

If we make a mistake, we will be transparent and immediately work to resolve it and improve.

Our kitchen uses REAL food and is picky for a purpose. Quality nutrition matters in brain development.



Programs

Infants: Ages: 6 weeks to ~18 months

Infants are loved, cuddled, talked to, and played with while given a safe, secure environment to explore. Baby sign language is introduced and used regularly to encourage early communication skills. Each child under 12 months has a safe sleeping space and is carefully supervised as they discover their world. Exceptional health and hygiene procedures are followed (including hand washing, diapering, feeding and laundering procedures) to help control communicable diseases. Caregivers update Brightwheel continually throughout the day to give you a nearly real-time record of your baby's care, including eating, diapering, sleeping, and significant skill development.

Waddlers: Ages ~18 months to ~30 months

Waddlers are developing rapidly in all areas. They are on the move and beginning to show independence, problem-solving skills and an understanding of language. These children are given opportunities to explore and learn through self-directed activities both indoors and outdoors. They are guided in building loving relationships with other children and adults and encouraged to develop self-help skills such as eating habits, toilet training and washing their own hands. Brightwheel is continually updated to keep you informed about your child's eating, diapering/toilet training and sleeping.

Toddlers: Ages ~30 months to ~3.5 years

Toddlers are gaining more independence and language skills as well as self-help skills. Through proper guidance and planning these children are encouraged to develop these skills through an array of teacher directed and child-led activities. They are very active and eager to explore their world. We will guide in building kind relationships with other children and adults and encourage the development of self-help skills such as preparing snacks, setting tables, toilet training and washing their own hands. They will be given opportunities to explore indoors and outdoors. Brightwheel is continually updated to keep you informed about your child's eating, diapering/toilet training and sleeping.

Preschool: Ages ~3 years to ~5 years

Preschoolers are becoming very independent, verbal, and constantly exploring and testing the world around them. These children are given opportunities to enhance their creativity and curiosity through teacher and child-directed hands-on activities both indoors and outdoors. These activities center on physical, cognitive, social and emotional development that will help each child have a successful start in kindergarten. We help them to develop independence and teach them how to interact with their peers in a positive, nurturing environment that promotes self-confidence. We provide a nearly real-time Brightwheel report to let you know what your child did that day so you can have a meaningful conversation at home about their day.

*All ages are approximate and may vary depending on the child's readiness to move up and/or availability in the next classroom.

Parkside ratios

We have found the formula for exceptional childcare is exceptional teachers caring for a small number of children at a time. Even the best teacher with excellent classroom management can be limited by having too many children to care for at one time. For this reason we set our “in-house” ratios lower than state ratios. We also have extra hands on staff to step in at busier times of the day. Our teachers are our largest and most valuable expense. We support our wonderful teachers to give your child the absolute BEST care and early education experience possible.

Parkside Teacher to Child Ratios:

Infants 6 weeks-18 months	1:4
Waddlers 18-36 months	1:7
Toddlers 2.5 years- 3.5 years	1:8
Pre-K 3.5 years-5 years	1:10

State Ratios:

1:5	6 weeks - 18 months
1:8	18 months - 36 months
1:12	2.5 years - 3 years
1:15	3.5 years - 5 years

Orientation & Your Child's First day

Orientation allows each family to review the parent handbook and to discuss expectations of our partnership in the child's learning experience. We will exchange paperwork, set your door code, walk you through our communication app and prepare you for your child's first day.

By taking care of a few details in advance, you can help ensure a smooth transition for your child to a new environment. Here's what we suggest:

Consider an accompanied introduction day

Before the first day, you are welcome to come with your child and spend some time in the classroom. This allows you and your child to get acquainted with the environment and caregivers.

Paperwork

We are required by state regulations to have emergency contact info, authorized pick up list along with your child's medical history and immunization records once you enroll. Please bring the following to orientation:

- 1) Your enrollment application
- 2) Your child's immunization records or exemption form
- 3) Individualized Care Plan: This helps personalize care from day one.

First day

Check your child in via Brightwheel on the Check-in iPad. Walk your child to class and give your child's things to the classroom teacher. Wash your child's hands and then either sit with your child until your ready to leave or hand off your child to a teacher. It is our experience that even the most apprehensive children settle down shortly after the parent leaves. For your own peace of mind, feel free to call or message at anytime and follow along in Brightwheel during the day to see how your child is doing.

What to wear

We are a Play based school. Children should always wear comfortable, washable clothing and shoes. Our activities are active, hands-on and sometimes get messy... Special clothes are best saved for other occasions. The children will experience our outdoor classroom on a daily basis, so clothing should be appropriate for the season and weather.

What to bring

Each child will have a place in the classroom to store personal items. Please bring: A change (Or two!) of seasonally appropriate clothes- shirt, pants, underwear and socks. A water bottle if older than one year. A Blanket for nap time. Diapers&Wipes if not potty trained. Bottle&Formula or Breast milk and Baby food if your child is not eating from our menu.



Your Child's Experience

At Parkside Playschool we value the positive learning experiences that happen during the first five years of life and realize that they can affect a child's lifelong educational, social, and emotional journey.

NUTRITION

The relationship between nutrition, health and learning is undeniably strong: nutrition is one of the three major factors that impact a child's development (environment and genes are the other two). For this reason we take the responsibility of caring for and feeding your kids seriously.

Our Menu

We pride ourselves in offering seasonal menus with NO processed ingredients. We never serve food with HFCS, Artificial Sweeteners, or Artificial Colors. We bake from scratch-- muffins, biscuits, pancakes and pizza dough—using Montana Wheat Flour that is GMO free. Menus are posted in the lobby and on our website, www.parksideplayschool.com/parents.

Meal Times

Lunch and Snack times can be found on your child's class schedule. Older children will have opportunities to help prepare food and their meals are served family style. You are welcome to join your child for lunch. Just let us know to add you to the lunch count.

Food Allergies and Special Diets

Notify the director if your child has food allergies. You will be asked to fill out an Allergy Care Plan. Please bring a statement from your child's doctor to document the food allergy and include any special instructions or emergency procedures. Menu items with equivalent nutritional value will be substituted for allergy-causing foods or you may be asked to bring food from home.

NAPTIME

We provide a crib for infants up to 12 months of age. Naptimes for infants are determined on an individual basis. Waddlers, Toddlers, and Preschoolers take one nap right after lunch. For all ages except babies under 12 months, we provide a cot and bottom sheet. We ask that parents bring a blanket and any security items that your child needs. If older children no longer sleep during this time, state licensing requires that they have an opportunity to rest for at least one hour. We change crib sheets daily (or more often if wet or soiled). Cot sheets and blankets are washed weekly.

CURRICULUM

We align with Magda Gerber's RIE philosophy in our Infant and Young Toddler classrooms. The basis for this philosophy is a respect for and a trust in the baby as an **initiator**, an **explorer**, and a **self-learner**.

We demonstrate our respect for children every time we interact with them. Respecting a child means to treat even the youngest infant as a unique human being, not as an object.

We are Reggio inspired in our Toddler and PreK classroom and believe in the power of a responsive classroom environment and caring teachers that value the parent-teacher partnership. Reggio classrooms are often child led and tend to be project based.

Family Involvement

We encourage you to talk with your child's lead teacher about opportunities to get involved with the classroom through story time and other activities.

Parent Collaboration Meetings

Parkside exists to support NWA families and we want to ensure we are doing this. Our collaboration meetings give feedback about our program and suggestions for going forward. All parents are welcome to make suggestions, give kudos and share any questions concerns. Also, check out our Parkside Parents Group on Facebook.

Parkside Family Field Trips

Family Field Trips provide opportunities to get to know the other Parkside families. Community events may be tied to a fundraiser to help make improvements to our programs.

Parents Night Out

4 hours of care provided on pre- arranged Friday or Saturday evenings. Meal will be included. Cost is \$30 per child. Hours are 6:30pm-10:30pm. Check our Family Calendar in the lobby or on our website for dates.

Razorbacks Home Game Day Care

5 hours of care provided on Razorback Home Game Days. A meal and snack will be included. Cost is \$45 per child. Hours depend on Kickoff time. You do not need to attend the game to sign up for care. ;)

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent teacher conferences allow us to communicate with parents one on one. We will discuss expected child development and set goals for the coming months.

Brag Box

Each month we will have a voting booth for "employee of the month". Some months will be entirely parent choice, some will be combined opinions of fellow staff along with parents. If you notice a teacher going above and beyond, we want to know about it! 😊

Parent Questions

Watch for these in our lobby and on our Facebook page! Your feedback keeps helps us stay relevant.

Parent Volunteer Program

Our Volunteer Program allows parents to participate in daily activities in the classroom. We appreciate our volunteers and having regular volunteers allows us to dive into more involved activities! Volunteers are background checked and trained in childcare basics.



Parkside Policies

HOURS OF OPERATION

We are open from 7:00 AM - 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

ADMISSIONS

Parkside Playschool offers full-time and part-time enrollment. We do not offer half-day care.

In order for a child to be admitted, the Center must have a completed enrollment form and current immunization records or exemption paperwork for that child before the child's first day. Please keep emergency contact info updated. Your child may be placed on a waiting list in the event that the age-appropriate class is full. This does not guarantee that child a place, but we will keep you updated on openings as they come available.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is due by the due date on the invoice sent through email. You are welcome to pay by card through Brightwheel, or by check or cash through the drop box in the office. Late payments that are more than 14 days late will be subject to a late fee of 10% of your child's weekly tuition each week until tuition is current. If payment is more than 30 days late and arrangements have not been made with the Center Director, your child will lose his/her place in the class and that place could be offered to a new student.

Please note that there is no tuition decrease for sick days, vacation days, holidays, snow days or teacher in-service days. This allows us to offer our employees added benefits such as paid time off, paid holidays, paid training days, etc. If you have any questions regarding your account, please contact the office.

DROP OFF

While we don't have set hours that your child must attend, we do ask that each child arrive at the Center before 10:00AM so we can have an adequate headcount for lunch. If you will be arriving later than 10:00AM, please let us know. Please note that lunchtime and naptime are the busiest times of day; therefore, we ask that you make every effort to keep this time undisturbed.

Please keep in mind that in order for your child to gain the full benefit of a balanced daily schedule it is important for them to be present between the hours of 9:30am and 3:30pm. This allows them sufficient time to engage in the majority of the daily activities, eat all 3 meals with their classmates, and get a good rest time established.

LATE PICK UP POLICY

We understand that time is precious and unexpected things arise. But you must pick-up your child by 6:00 p.m. Our caregivers work very hard to care for your child during the day; therefore, it is important for them to have time for themselves and their families. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute after 6:03p.m. will be charged to you in the event that you arrive late. **Please call if you experience an emergency so that we may reassure your child and avoid any unnecessary panic.**

CLOSINGS

We are closed for the major holidays listed below and for 2 In-Service days per year:

4th of July
Labor Day
Memorial Day
Thanksgiving Break (Thu-Fri)
Christmas Break (24th-26th)
New Years Day (NYE Half day)

Inclement Weather

If inclement weather conditions prevent the Center from opening at the regularly scheduled time, an announcement will be made through a group Brightwheel message by the Director, on our Facebook page and on local news and radio stations.

EDUCATIONAL CARE PLAN

Teachers observe children over the course of their time together in class. As partners in your child's care, we have a unique peek at your child's development. To respect that role, we screen for developmental delays using a developmentally appropriate screening tool. If there is a suspected delay, the director will speak with the parent to determine if they will make a referral to the child's PCP or if they would like assistance in making a referral to the NWA Education CO-OP and/or Early Intervention Services. Permission will be obtained before formal testing is initiated. Upon completion of testing, a conference with the therapist, parent, and director will be scheduled to discuss test results and determine if the child is in need of additional services. The program and classroom teacher will receive a copy of the educational goals so that they may integrate classroom activities to meet the child's identified goals. Parkside Playschool will provide space for on site therapy sessions, at the parent's request. If your child is already receiving therapies, we will do our best with resources available to support any current plan.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

We use positive discipline to guide our interactions with children.

- Give simple and consistent expectations
- Connect before you correct.
- Tell the child what they CAN do.
- Only give choices that are truly choices.
- Be firm but kind.
- Encourage responsibility for actions and problem solving as opposed to punishment.

We are committed to guiding your child toward acceptable choices through redirecting, acknowledging emotions or removal from the situation. The use of physical punishment is never permitted, nor do we use degrading or embarrassing actions or words. Discipline will never be associated with food, rest, toilet training or illness. We do not do time-out. But we will encourage cool down periods where the child is supported by a teacher when handling a difficult emotion.

A parent/teacher conference may be requested to find a solution. If the problem continues after all other options have been exhausted, you may be given additional resources and asked to withdraw your child from the Center. Please let us know of any events in your child's home life that might affect his/her behavior at the Center so that we may be better informed when guiding behavior.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you have any concerns about anything experienced at the Center, please consider talking with the child's lead teacher and explaining the concern or setting up a meeting with the Director.

We strive to maintain a clean, healthy environment for our children and staff. One ill child can infect the whole classroom and ultimately the whole facility. If your child shows any of the following symptoms, he/she must be kept home until they are ***without symptoms for 24 hours*** or a physician's note is provided. This will minimize the spread of infection and allow appropriate recuperation time for your child.

I NEED TO STAY HOME IF...						
I HAVE A	I AM	I HAVE	I HAVE A	I HAVE	I HAVE AN	I HAVE BEEN IN
FEVER	VOMITING	DIARRHEA	RASH	HEAD LICE	EYE INFECTION	THE HOSPITAL
						
Temperature of 100.4 or higher	Within the past 24 hours	Within the past 24 hours.	Body rash with itching or fever.	Itchy head, active head lice.	Redness, itching, and/or "crusty" drainage from eye.	Hospital stay and/or ER Visit
I AM READY TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL WHEN I AM....						
Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication i.e. Tylenol, Motrin	Free from vomiting for at least 2 solid meals	Free from diarrhea for at least 24 hours	Free from rash itching, or fever. I have been evaluated by my doctor if needed.	Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home and proof is provided to nurse.	Evaluated by my doctor and have note to return to school	Released by my medical provider to return to school.

If you keep your child home because of illness, we ask that you contact us so that we may be informed and look for symptoms in other children to help control the spread of infectious diseases.

If your child shows any of the above symptoms after drop-off, you will be called to pick them up as soon as possible. Please keep in mind that Parkside does NOT have sick care so we ask that you pick up your child within a reasonable amount of time (within 30 minutes if possible). If we cannot reach you we will call other emergency contacts you have listed. This policy is set to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses and communicable disease. Your consideration in observing these policies will help keep our staff and all of the children in our care healthy and happy!

Medical Care Plan

As part of our enrollment application, we ask parents to share information about any chronic medical conditions and/or allergies. If your child has a specific medical condition we need to be aware of, you will need to bring a medical care plan from your child's doctor confirming the condition and include any special instructions or emergency procedures so we can ensure your child's safety while they are in our care. A copy of care plans are filed in the office and shared with your child's classroom staff. Allergies and chronic medical conditions are confidentially posted in the classroom.

Medication

Before our staff can administer any type of medication, you must complete a "Medication Administration Request" form, which is available through the office. Ongoing treatment for chronic conditions, such as allergies or asthma, should be administered at home whenever possible. All medication must be in its original container, not have an expired date and your child's name must be clearly written on the container. Licensing requires us to have the following information: Date, Type, Drug name, Time to be administered (please note the last dosage you gave child) and Dosage (we will not exceed dosage on container/box). All medications will be kept in a locked container out of the children's reach.

Accidents/Injuries/Emergency Treatment

While precautions are taken to avoid injuries, childhood accidents do happen as your child explores new physical skills and muscle control. All of our staff is trained in basic first-aid for minor injuries. And at least one teacher in each classroom is CPR trained. In the event that emergency treatment is needed here is the protocol our staff will follow:

Minor - If your child suffers a minor injury (i.e. small scrape or cut) that requires first-aid, you will be notified with an "Accident Report" when you pick up your child.

Serious – If your child suffers a somewhat more serious injury (i.e. bump on head, or possibility of stitches) we will contact you to come to the Center to further evaluate your child.

Severe - In the event of a severe or critical injury (i.e. stitches or head injury) you will be notified immediately, we will contact your child's designated physician and call 911 for your child to be transported to the nearest medical facility for treatment.*

*If an ambulance is required, costs incurred are the responsibility of the parent/guardian. A parent/guardian signature on the "Authorization for Treatment" section of your child's enrollment form is required for our records. **Please note: If we cannot reach you, we will refer to those listed as emergency contacts on your child's enrollment form.

Saying Goodbye

PRE-K GRADUATION

When your child is ready to move on to Kindergarten, we will hold a graduation ceremony in the Summer.

WITHDRAWAL

When you are certain your child will no longer be attending, we require that you fill out the “Withdrawal Form”. We ask that you give the Center at least a one-month notice for withdrawal. This notice allows us to adjust staffing requirements to keep our care exceptional and our tuition affordable. If no notice is given, all tuition and fees will continue to be charged until your child’s place is filled with a new student and you will be held responsible for paying this in full. Tuition reimbursements will not be given for early withdrawals.

We would love to hear about your experience at Parkside and would welcome any feedback, good or bad that you would be willing to provide.



Thank you for being part of the Parkside Family! It is truly an honor that you have chosen to partner with us in your child’s care.

Warmly,

Melanee Lavery
Director/Owner
Parkside Playschool

