

# PARENT HANDBOOK





## About Us

Thank you for choosing Parkside Playschool for your child's early learning experience! We are licensed through the Arkansas Department of Human Services, and compliance reviews are available at all times on their website at [dhs.arkansas.gov](http://dhs.arkansas.gov).

### **Our Mission**

To provide a quality early childhood learning experience to NWA families for children 6 weeks-5 years of age.

### **Philosophy**

At Parkside, we respect and trust in the child as an initiator, an explorer, and a self-learner. We believe in providing a holistic and community minded environment that considers and supports the whole child. Emotional intelligence is a core part of our care, and we will always prioritize that in our routines and discipline strategies. We utilize behavior guidance as a discipline strategy. We will continually educate ourselves and stay connected to our parents and community to provide the most relevant and research-based environment possible.



## General Policies

### **Hours of Operation**

We are open from 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition is due by the due date on the invoice sent through Brightwheel email. You are welcome to pay by card or bank draft through Brightwheel, or check/cash through the drop box in the lobby. Payments that are more than 15 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 office, 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 pause in tuition for sick days, vacation days, holidays, snow days, teacher in-service days or any other closures. This consistency 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.

In addition to standard tuition, we have three activity fees of \$125 throughout the year. These are billed in September, March, and June. All students are billed these fees regardless of if they are full or part time. These fees are used for classroom supplies, overall school updates, as well as to cover general yearly fees we pay as a daycare.

## **Closings**

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

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Break (Thu-Fri)

Winter Break (December 23rd-January 1st)

Spring Break (Aligns with Fayetteville Public School closing)

Memorial Day

4<sup>th</sup> of July

Each month (minus August, December and March), we will close at 5 p.m. one Friday to host staff meetings. This is non-negotiable, your child **must** be picked up by 5 p.m.

## **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. We will align with the Fayetteville Public School system on inclement weather related decisions. Please watch for announcements for closings when there is inclement weather from FPS.

## **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 monitor for developmental delays using a developmentally appropriate assessment 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 onsite therapy sessions, at the parent's request. If your child is already receiving therapy, 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.

-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, and/or removing them 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 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, we aim to supply additional resources.



## Programs

This chart portrays the ratios we strive to keep on a daily basis. We also have floats and part time teachers in and out of rooms from day to day to assist in busier moments of the routines. Our goal with our amount of staff is for our parents to feel confident in their child's environment as well as make sure our staff are supported.

Room	Age Range*	Staff: Max Children	State Ratios
Babies	6 weeks-1 year	3:10	1:5
Waddlers Fall Semester	1 -2 years	2:10	1:5
Waddlers Spring Semester	1.5-2.5 years	2:12	1:8
Toddlers	2-3 years	2:14	1:8
Juniors	3-4 years	2:15	1:12
Pre-K	4-5 years	1:12 or 2:15	1:15

\*Starting age as of August 1st of the school year



## Curriculum

Our Parkside staff use the Arkansas Explorers Curriculum as a foundation and guide for creating their lesson plans and also focus on the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. Reggio keeps a focus on “the whole child” and the importance of children as people. Lesson plans are ultimately based on the interests of the students and individualized to meet the needs of each child developmentally. Reggio focuses on the Play Based Learning Model where exposure is the key to learning. Parkside does not use an academic based curriculum, but rather uses what the children are interested in to provide opportunities for in-depth learning.

### **Daily Schedule and Activities**

Each classroom has a schedule tailored to each age group. Each class has a daily schedule posted for their room.

### **Nap/Rest Time**

We are required by state regulations to offer at least 1 hour of supervised rest time per day. If your child does not nap, they should be prepared to do quiet activities on their cot or in a separate area of the room from the napping children. Please note, it is common for children who do not nap at home to nap at school.

## **Outdoor Play**

At Parkside, we believe it is imperative to health and development to spend time outdoors. We have an all weather play policy. If it is safe to be outside, you will find your child in their outdoor classroom. Parents are responsible for sending weather appropriate clothing for their child based on the season. This looks like rain gear in wetter months and layers and cold weather accessories in colder months. In hotter months, we like to take advantage of water play, shorten outdoor time, and take short “cool down” breaks indoors. Please expect that your child may come home dirty, wet or have clothing soiled in art materials. Outdoor play is the most engaging time for children where teachers have the greatest opportunity to dive into those deep learning moments.

\*\*We do not have temperature limits, please send your child in appropriate gear for the weather

## **Technology**

We do not regularly use technology for any of our children. In classes where children are over the age of two, we encourage teachers to use technology as a tool for learning when necessary. This should only be used in situations where the children are unable to observe a subject in person. We do use devices to play music from time to time consisting mostly of movement songs. Otherwise, we encourage teachers to engage and sing songs directly with their children.

## **Pets & Visiting Animals**

We are extremely interested in having pets at Parkside. This includes dogs and other animals at the facility. If your child has severe allergies to any animals, Parkside may not be a good fit for your family. Staff may introduce a class pet to the classroom. Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. No animal may be brought into Parkside without first notifying and receiving permission from the Director. Once approved, pets and visiting animals must have documentation of current rabies shot from a licensed veterinarian.

## **Farm & Garden Program**

Parkside currently has goats, cats and chickens. Our Pre-K classroom is responsible for their every day care, and all of our children visit the animals throughout the year. We also have a fenced garden right outside of our fenced in play area that our children take part in as part of our curriculum. There is a separate permission slip to allow your child to participate in the program.

## **Gulley Park**

We are lucky to be located just a short walk away from Gulley Park. Our classrooms take frequent trips over to the park to use the playground, walking trails, and the variety of natural sceneries to our advantage. We strive for our Junior and Pre-K classrooms to visit the park at least once a week. For your child to participate you can grant permission in their enrollment form.

## **Meals & Snacks**

Parkside believes in the importance of good nutrition for optimal brain development! We offer two snacks and a lunch throughout the day. Our menu is made of recipes without high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors or preservatives, and is fresh and organic and/or non-gmo when possible. We are a nut free facility. Menus will be posted on our website as well as on our parent boards. Children will be encouraged to sample all foods that are offered, but will never be forced to eat.

## **Meals & Snacks Continued**

Please inform your child's teacher if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant) so a substitution can be made. We do our best to meet these dietary needs, but will let you know if something needs to be sent from home for your child. At lunch, we are required to serve cow's milk. If you prefer that your child does not drink cow's milk, we ask that you send a milk replacement. The milk replacement must be nut free. Allergy safe replacements may be: oat milk, coconut milk, ripple milk, or rice milk.

For infants under 1 year, parents are required to provide formula or breastmilk. If you wish for your infant to eat pureed baby food that will need to be sent as well. Our baby teachers are knowledgeable on baby led weaning and are happy to facilitate this experience at school using our menu.

## **Food From Home**

If you would like to send your child food to school, it can be kept in the classroom fridge for meal times.\* If your child arrives before 8 a.m. and you wish to let them have a small snack to hold them over, they must sit at a meal table to finish it.\* If children arrive after 8 a.m. they should finish any small snack before entering the classroom or outdoor classroom.

Each class has their own special birthday tradition that will take the place of having outside food brought in to celebrate.

**\*ANY OUTSIDE FOOD MUST BE NUT FREE.**

## **Allergies/Action Plans**

If your child has an allergy, please provide an Allergy Action Plan. This completed form will be available in your child's room as well as in the office. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please make sure we have the proper medication and that it stays up to date.

## **Clothing & Items From Home**

For any child who is not yet potty trained, parents should send diapers and wipes. For children working on potty training, please still send them in diapers instead of pull-ups.

All children will need a contigo water bottle with autospout straw and a small backpack to store extra clothing (2 changes worth). We will send home their backpack daily so parents can restock clothing as needed. Parkside will provide a reusable gallon ziplock bag for dirty items sent home in backpack. If lost, parents will be required to replace.

We ask that toys from home are NOT brought into your child's class. Teachers will message throughout the week if your child is low on any of their supplies.

## **Dress for School**

Parkside is a play based school. This may mean that your child participates in messy play. We encourage you to dress your child in clothing that is comfortable, appropriate for the weather, and that you keep in mind your child may get paint, mud, and other play messes on their clothing. In rainy seasons, we encourage you to leave rain boots at the school for the random unexpected times of rain we may experience.

## **Potty Training**

We are happy to assist with toilet training at Parkside! In order to do so, we expect your child to be learning self help skills. This includes pulling their pants up and down, which we focus on in our Waddler classroom even for basic diaper changes. Even for those working on using the potty, we do not allow pull-ups and are happy to go through the process with diapers and then to underwear. Before wearing underwear to school the child must have a whole successful weekend in underwear at home (limited accidents). Please do not ask us to set a timer, use sticker charts or any other form of control regarding using the toilet. We can frequently tell the child it is time to use the restroom during the process but at no point are we allowed to have a child sit on the potty if they say no.

## **Arrival**

Students may arrive beginning at 7:30 a.m. Parents must accompany their child into the center and all the way to their classroom, or to the outdoor classroom gate depending where drop off is happening. Please do not leave your child unattended to go into their classroom on their own, and communicate with their teacher to let them know they have arrived. Parent or person dropping off must check-in the child through Brightwheel before the child is dropped off.

## **Departure**

Students must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. Anyone picking up a child must be an approved pick-up AND one of the following:

- recognized by a staff member
- escorted by admin to pick up
- show their I.D. to a teacher to confirm their identity if not recognized

If you expect someone new to pick up your child, please add them as a Brightwheel contact, communicate this through a Brightwheel message, and have them have their I.D. handy. Parent or person picking up must check-out the child through Brightwheel before the child leaves the teacher.

\*\*Each classroom has a window for lunch and nap where drop offs or pick ups are prohibited. We understand that sometimes appointments may only be available at certain times, but please make arrangements to get them before the window starts and drop them back off after the window is over. It is an extreme disruption to the class as a whole if children arrive or leave in this timeframe.

## **Late Pick-up Policy**

In the event that a pick-up is unable to arrive by 5:30 for a child, there will be a fee per child of \$1 per minute paid in cash to the teacher with your child. This fee must be paid no later than the morning after the late pick up. Please let us know with as much notice as possible if you expect you will be late. We understand this may happen on a limited basis. If late pick-ups become a consistent problem, further fees will be charged.

## **Brightwheel**

Each child has their own Brightwheel account. This is the app we use for all communication between Parkside and families. All communication with teachers regarding the child and school should be made through Brightwheel. Main contacts are **required** to have access to Brightwheel for messaging. You are also welcome to communicate with admin through Brightwheel or text/call the business phone at (479)717-7020.

## **Brightwheel Continued**

Teachers work extremely hard to enter real time updates into Brightwheel, but please understand they are not always able to enter things immediately or to respond to messages immediately. We love Brightwheel as a tool, but we expect our teachers to be focused mostly on the children in the moment and to use Brightwheel when they have some down time, for example, at nap. Brightwheel QR codes are conveniently located throughout the center and outside to facilitate touch free check-in and check-outs. This is the platform that we use for billing as well.

## **Family Involvement**

### **Parent Volunteer Program**

We encourage parents to spend time at Parkside! Please talk to your child's lead teacher about scheduling a time to come in for volunteering. This may look like reading to the class, gardening, leading art activities, playing a musical instrument, or even joining in on a trip to the park. If you have a special talent or hobby you would like to share, please let us know. We would be happy to have you!

Aside from scheduled individual volunteering, our PTO plans several opportunities to volunteer during parent work days, fundraisers, picture days, and other special events hosted by Parkside.

### **Parent Teacher Organization**

Parkside exists to support NWA families. It takes a village and without one, this parenting gig is hard and lonely work. We would love for you to join our PTO where parents aim to meet once a month, plan monthly fundraisers for Parkside, and help us plan other special events! We aim to provide space for parents to come and share ideas and struggles. To join, please email [parksideplayschoolpto@gmail.com](mailto:parksideplayschoolpto@gmail.com)! If you do not wish to join the PTO, but would like to connect with other parents, check out our Parkside Parents Group on Facebook!

### **Parents' Night Out**

Parents' Night Out offers 4 hours of care on pre-arranged Saturdays. A meal will be included. Cost is \$30 per child or \$50 per family. Hours are typically 4 p.m.-8 p.m. During Razorback football season, we may provide 5 hours of care around game time and that cost will be \$45 per child or \$60 per family. Check our calendar on our website for dates!

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences allow us to communicate with parents one on one. Our intent is to have these two times a year. With one being close to the start of the year and one towards the end. We will discuss expected child development and set goals for the coming months. If a teacher or parent is concerned about development, meetings can be arranged any time.

# Health Policy

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, they must be kept home until they are ***without symptoms for 24 hours***. This will minimize the spread of infection and allow appropriate recuperation time for your child.

## **Your child should stay home if:**

- They have a fever of 100.4 or higher in the last 24 hours. For babies under 6 months of age, any increased fever excludes them from care. Your child may return after being fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- They are vomiting or having diarrhea (2 or more loose stools in 24 hours). If a potty trained child is not able to make it to the toilet with diarrhea and it soils their clothing, even just after one time they will need to be picked up. The same goes for children wearing diapers, but the rule is if the diarrhea is not contained in the diaper. There are instances where diarrhea may be excused, so please let your child's teacher know if they are taking a medication that may cause loose or watery stools. Your child may return 24 hours after they last vomit or have diarrhea.
- They have an unexplained rash with any level of fever.
- They have symptoms of pink eye.
- They have been in the hospital in the last 24 hours unless they have been released by a physician.

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 in 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), length of time we will need to administer, and dosage. We will not exceed dosage on container or 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. As well, all staff are required to obtain their CPR certification within two months of being hired. 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” through the Brightwheel app.

Serious – If your child suffers a somewhat more serious injury (i.e. bump on head, or possibility of stitches) we will post a photo of the injury through their account and 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.



## **Pre-K Graduation**

When your child is ready to move on to Kindergarten, we will host a graduation celebration!

## **Withdrawal**

When you are certain your child will no longer be attending, we require that you fill out the “Withdrawal Form.” You can get a copy of the form from the office. We require that you give the center at least a 30-day notice for withdrawal. This notice allows us to adjust staffing requirements to keep our care exceptional and our tuition affordable. If we receive this notice, tuition will be scheduled to stop after that month. If no notice is given, parent is still responsible for 30-day payment. 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. You are welcome to contact admin by text or phone call anytime at (479)717-7020.

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

Warmly,

The Parkside Playschool Team

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Thank you for taking the time to thoroughly read our handbook. Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to our policies.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Required Supplies List

- Formula or Breastmilk
- Diapers (no pull-ups)
- Wipes
- Cup for water (see type below)
- Small backpack (max 10”) with at least **two** changes of clothes
- Weather appropriate accessories to stay at school (hat, gloves, etc.)



This cup also available in stainless steel

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**PARKSIDE**  
PLAYSCHOOL

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