

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.

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 Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM.

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 by check/cash given to admin in the office. Payments that are more than 15 days late will be subject to a late fee of 10% of your child's 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 may 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 trimester fees of \$150 due on the 15th of September, March and June. Both full-time and part-time students pay these fees.

Closings

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

Labor Day

Thanksgiving Break (Th-Fri)

Winter Break (December 23rd-January 1st)

Spring Break (Aligns with Fayetteville Public School closing)

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Teacher In-Service Days (Th-Fri before new school year begins)

Inclement Weather

If inclement weather conditions prevent the center from opening at the regularly scheduled time, an announcement will be made through a Brightwheel message. We will align with the Fayetteville Public School district on inclement weather related decisions. Please watch for announcements for closings when there is inclement weather from FPS. In the event that FPS closes more than 3 consecutive days for inclement weather, we may make our own independent decision in conjunction with the Fayetteville Nature School in regards to closures and/or late starts. We will consider the weather, road conditions where our teachers live, and the number of teachers who may be home with their own kiddos who might be out of school. To meet the needs of the largest number of people, we will strive to be open whenever possible. Please understand that we cannot respond to parent communications about our decision.

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 parents' 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.

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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 a problem continues after all other options have been exhausted, we aim to supply additional resources which can include suggestions for other childcare arrangements outside of our program.

Programs

This chart portrays the ratios we strive to keep on a daily basis. We also have float teachers in and out of rooms from day to day. Our goal for staffing is for our parents to feel confident in their child's care as well as to make sure our staff are supported.

Room	Age Range	Staff: Max Children	State Ratios
Babies	6 weeks-1.5 years	3:10	1:5
Waddlers Fall Semester	1 -2 years	2:10	1:5
Waddlers Spring Semester	1.5-2.5 years	3:14	1:8
Toddlers Fall Semester	2-3 years	3:14	1:8
Toddlers Spring Semester	2.5-3.5 years	2:14	1:12
Juniors	3-4 years	2:16	1:12
Pre-K	4-5 years	2:16	1:15

Curriculum

Parkside Playschool uses an eclectic approach for curriculum. While using Reggio Emilia as the foundation for learning, our teachers also use Montessori concepts as a guide for creating their lesson plans. 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. A daily schedule is posted for each room on the parent board by their classroom door.

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 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 bring their I.D. Every adult needs their own Brightwheel code. Brightwheel codes are not shared among adults. 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.

* We respectfully ask that adults give their undivided attention to their child and their child's teacher during drop-offs and pick-ups. This means putting the phone away and showing your child how important they are to you by focusing on them during these key moments of their day.

Late Pick-up

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. A child is considered picked up when they are checked out of Brightwheel, no longer physically in the classroom or outdoor classroom, and the teacher is free to complete her closing duties.

Parking

It can get crowded in our little parking lot during drop-off and pick-up times. To help everyone have as smooth a time as possible we have a one-way direction for traffic around the circle. There are 4 parking spaces to the right when coming down the hill and three parallel parking spaces heading back up the hill on the other side. There are another 3 spaces next to the Waddler gate and another 4 to the left of the dumpster by the retaining wall. Staff park in the 14 spots beyond that, but if they are available you are welcome to use them. Please be mindful of parking in a way that leaves enough space for others, and stay just long enough during busy times to pick up or drop off your child(ren).

Doors & Gates

For safety reasons we have a policy that only teachers and parents open doors and gates. It would help us tremendously if parents could continue this while on Parkside property as kids get confused when expectations aren't consistent.

Nap/Rest Time

We are required by state regulations to offer at least 1 hour of supervised rest time per day. All children are expected to stay on their cots while the class is trying to go to sleep. If your child does not nap, they will be given the opportunity to look at books quietly on their cot once those who do sleep have fallen asleep. Please note: it is common for children who do not nap at home to nap at school.

Outdoor Play

Parkside Playschool is an all-weather play school. We believe it is imperative to health and development to spend time outdoors. You will find your child in their outdoor classroom about 50% of their day or more weather permitting. 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 and shorten outdoor time to small increments at a time. 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.

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. We rarely use devices to play music consisting mostly of movement songs. Otherwise we encourage teachers to engage and sing songs directly with their children.

Photo Use

We take photos of your child(ren) for use in our classrooms, in portfolios, and on Brightwheel. Parents choose on the enrollment form whether or not they want to give permission for photos to be used in our newsletter and on social media. In order to respect other parents' choices, please refrain from posting photos of other people's children on social media.

Pets & Visiting Animals

We are extremely interested in having pets at Parkside Playschool. This includes farm animals, a cat, and other animals at the center. If your child has severe allergies to any animals, Parkside Playschool 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 Playschool without first notifying and receiving permission from the Director and providing documentation of rabies vaccination form a licensed veterinarian.

Farm & Garden Program

Parkside Playschool currently has goats, chickens, fish, frogs, and a cat. Our older classrooms are responsible for their everyday care, and all of our children over age one 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. We ask that families please honor the hard work that our Farm & Garden Manager and the children put into the garden by observing it from outside the fence only.

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 amazing space, walking trails, and the variety of natural sceneries to our advantage. We strive for our older classrooms to visit the park at least once a week.

Meals & Snacks

Parkside Playschool believes in the importance of good nutrition for optimal brain development! We offer two snacks and a lunch each 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.

Our classes sit around tables and pass dishes family style, so children can serve themselves. Our older three classes use small pitchers to pour their own milk. All children over the age of 12 months drink milk from an open cup. At least one teacher sits with the children while they eat. Teachers facilitate conversation during meals that includes the nutritional value of the foods being eaten or where those foods come from or what culture the foods are commonly eaten in, etc. We serve two food groups at each snack and a protein, a grain, two vegetables or one vegetable and one fruit with milk at lunch. We strive to serve two proteins each day without repeating a protein source during the week. Our Kitchen Manager provides education on nutrition for our children, and classroom teachers facilitate the instruction of the importance of eating healthy foods. Our Farm & Garden Manager also guides children in learning about nutrition as she works in the garden with them. There are links available to parents on our website for information about healthy eating. Our staff takes one hour of training each year regarding mealtime practices or nutrition.

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, gluten free) 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 organic 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. We ask that ready-made bottles be sent with your child each day, and the bottles will be returned to you at pick up. 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.

Parents will provide a water bottle for each child old enough to drink water. The lid of the water bottle must be one piece including any straw, and the mouthpiece must be covered when closed. Teachers will remind children to drink water around 8:30, 10:30 and 4:30 each day. Water will also be served with snacks around 9 & 3 each day and will be available to children throughout the day. Teachers will sanitize the water bottles at the end of each day in our 190 degree, 2 & ½ minute dishwasher.

Food From Home

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 needed, please make sure you have provided 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 send them in diapers or pull-ups that have velcro down the sides. See the Potty Training Agreement for information on

All children will need a Contigo water bottle with autospout straw or, if your older child chews their straw, the contigo water bottle with autopop leak proof lid. a small backpack to store extra clothing (2 changes worth). We will send their backpack home daily, so parents can restock clothing.

We require that toys or electronics from home are NOT brought into your child's class. Children over 1 year old can have a stuffy or lovey for naptime only. Children under 1 year old can have a pacifier without a stuffy attached to it for naptime. We do not use pacifiers at school after the first birthday. Teachers will message on Thursdays when your child is low on any of their supplies.

Dress for School

Parkside is a play-based school. This means that your child participates in messy play. We encourage you to dress your child in play clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for the weather. Please keep in mind your child will get paint, mud, and other play messes on their clothing. We ask that all children have rain boots with their names on them left here for the school year. We provide Muddy Buddies for the children to wear when it's raining or has just rained. We ask that all children either wear close-toed/close-heeled shoes or go barefoot at school.

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. Once your child is dry for half the day, they can start wearing pull-ups to school if you'd like. Before wearing underwear to school the child must have a whole successful weekend in underwear at home and poop at least once in the toilet at school. We cannot use rewards, bribery or timers for children who use the potty. We can frequently tell the child it is time to use the restroom and at every diaper change during the process but at no point are we allowed to have a child sit on the potty if they say no. It is also important to understand that your child may be successful at potty training at home faster than at school and regression is also a normal part of the process. If your child is having daily accidents at school then we may ask that your child return to diapers and we can try again at a later date.

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. Only those teachers who are assigned to your child's class can see messages sent to staff. Admin sees all of those messages plus messages sent only to admin. 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.

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-ins and check-outs. The iPad in the lobby is also available for check-ins and check-outs for approved pick-ups who prefer not to download the app. 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 one of your child's lead teachers 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!

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, and help plan other special events! We aim to provide space for parents to come and share ideas and struggles. If you're interested please message admin through Brightwheel! 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 \$40 per child or \$60 per family. Hours are typically 3-7 p.m. During Razorback football season we may provide extended care for an added fee if PNO falls on game day. Check our calendar on our website for dates! Parents' Night Out is available to current students, their siblings and alumni who have graduated from our Pre-K program.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences allow us to collaborate with parents one on one. Our intent is to have these two times a year around October and April. Sign-ups will come out via Brightwheel a couple of weeks in advance. 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 had a fever of 100.0 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 diseases. 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

All medication must be signed in and out in the office. Before our staff can administer any type of medication to your child, you must complete a Medicine Permission Slip which is available in the office and on Brightwheel. 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. Original labels are required for prescription medications. Licensing requires us to have the following information: date, type, drug name, time to be administered (please note the last dosage you gave your child), length of time we will need to administer, and dosage. We will not exceed the dosage on the 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. At least 50% of our staff and one teacher in every room is CPR certified. We host a CPR class once a year for all staff whose certification needs to be renewed. 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.

Saying Goodbye

Pre-K Graduation

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

Withdrawal

If you decide to withdraw your child earlier than the end of the summer before they start kindergarten, 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. Payment will be due for the 30 days after the date the 30-day notice is submitted to the office.

We would love to hear about your experience at Parkside and would welcome any feedback both complementary and constructive 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

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

PARKSIDE PLAYSCHOOL

Required Supplies List

- Formula or Breastmilk in ready made bottles
- Diapers (or pull-ups with velcro down the sides if actively potty training)
- Wipes
- Water bottle (See type below. It is also available in stainless steel.)
- Small backpack (max 10”) with at least 2 full changes of clothes **OR** two gallon sized ziploc bags with a full change of clothes in each to keep in your child’s cubby
- Weather appropriate accessories to stay at school (rain boots, hat, gloves, etc.)
- Bug spray and/or sunscreen if you opt out of what is supplied





2024-2025 Calendars

Closures

Labor Day - Sep 2
Thanksgiving Break - Nov 28-29
Winter Break - Dec 23-Jan 1
Spring Break - Mar 24-28
Memorial Day - May 26
Independence Day - Jul 4
Teacher In-Service - 2 days in Aug TBD

Early Out Closing @ 5:00

Sep 13	Feb 7
Oct 11	Apr 11
Nov 8	May 9
Dec 13	Jun 13
Jan 10	Jul 11

Parents' Night Out 3-7

Sep 14	Mar 8
Oct 12	Apr 12
Nov 9	May 10
Dec 14	Jun 14
Jan 11	Jul 12
Feb 8	Aug 9

Events

First Day of School - Aug 19
Picture Day - Oct 8, 8-11
Parent-Teacher Conferences - Oct 14-17
Fall Spirit Week - Oct 28-Nov 1
Fall Festival - Nov 1, 4:30-6
Winter Spirit Week - Feb 10-14
Annual Art Gala - Feb 22, 4:30-6
Parent-Teacher Conferences - Apr 14-17
Picture Day - April 22, 8-11
Teacher Appreciation Week - May 5-9
Pre-K Graduation - May 31, 10:00
Summer Spirit Week - Jun 16-20
Summer Party - Jun 20, 4:30-6