



The Meadow

Where Education Meets Nature

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Over In The Meadow

It is my mission to inspire a diverse, multiage group of learners to achieve academic excellence through play while developing a strong sense of character and community. My goal is to preserve each child's natural curiosity and love of learning.

As we increase our understanding of human intelligence and behavior, we know more about how we can learn effectively, and the value of learning throughout life. The Meadow's goals are to awaken a love of learning in every young person, and to give them the ability and desire to carry on learning into adulthood. I recognize that an educated person needs to be literate, competent in core academic disciplines, and a reflective, lifelong learner. A well rounded person needs to have a strong sense of self, a realization of their own gifts and talents, and a collection of skills to support one's goals. I strive to guide my students to cultivate the following capacities: creativity, critical thinking, communication, adaptability, initiative, accountability, leadership, and to be of service.

All this accomplished through play. It is well documented that our brain will make the proper synapses (connections) to learn and remember a fact or understand a task after repeating it hundreds of times. However, if we are doing it in PLAY, it only takes about twenty repetitions. Play is our work. Through deep, engaging themes we begin to understand the workings of the world, the delicacies of human relationships and how to hold them, along with understanding our self, our strengths and how we need others.

Where better to do this than in a meadow. Our time outside is precious. In nature we experience and develop a love of the land and all the cycles of life. The closer we are to the natural world the more likely we are to care for and preserve it, and in turn ourselves.

At The Meadow, I am committed to ensuring all students acquire these abilities so they are able to thrive in a changing world and be a contributor to the community. I place a strong emphasis on the relationship between the school's environment, their home, the natural world and myself, recognizing the critical role of families in fostering children's education. I see myself as an ally of the family, mentoring and supporting parent's efforts to guide the intellectual and emotional development of their children. When afforded respect, fairness, kindness, discipline, and appropriate instruction, I believe every child is capable of achieving their potential to the fullest.



Meadow Policies

Admission Requirements

To attend The Meadow, children must be three years of age and potty trained. A diaper at nap time is acceptable and must be provided by the parent/guardian.

The parent/guardian must drop off the student between 7:30 and 8:45am and pick up before or at their scheduled pick up time; 12:30pm for half day and 5:00pm.

The parent/guardian must provide a balanced, nutritious lunch for the student each day.

The parent/guardian must provide appropriate, well fitting, seasonal clothing and shoes, including two full sets of backup clothing, at all times. Students do not wear outside shoes indoors but may bring slippers to wear inside.

The parent/guardian must provide a sleep mat, blanket, and “snuggly” (if desired) each day for nap/rest time.

The parent/guardian is responsible for volunteering a minimum of 8 hours during the contract year. This could be in the form of driving/chaperoning for a field trip, helping to prep an activity, helping to repair play ground equipment or working in the garden. When you show support for your child’s school, they know it’s importance.

Admission and Scheduling Procedures

Applications will be processed on a first come first served basis by the date the application is received. If space is unavailable, the applicant will be placed on a waitlist and notified when openings occur. Current students will be offered new openings before waitlisted applicants. All students must be enrolled a minimum of 2 days per week. If a student is enrolled only one day a week due to availability, and another day becomes available, they must enroll in the newly available day or release their days for a another applicant.

Release of Child

No child will be release to anyone but the listed parent/guardian, unless I am previously notified. Even if the person is listed as an emergency contact, the parent/guardian must let me know prior to pick up. If you inform me that someone other than a parent/guardian or emergency contact will be picking up, they will need to provide me with a photo I.D.

If a non-custodial parent is not allowed to remove the child from care, I must have a copy of the court order stating so. If I have a copy of the court order, I can refuse them pick up of the child, however, will not endanger other children with a confrontation. If a non-custodial parent removes a child illegally, I will make police and yourself aware immediately.

If a person who arrives to pick up your child appears intoxicated or otherwise unable to transport your child safely, I will contact another person listed on your contact list for pick-up. If this situation occurs more than once, it will be grounds for termination of care.

Rates

Half Day 7:30am - 12:30pm \$45/day

Full Day 7:30am - 5:00pm \$55/day

Sick Days Each child has one weeks worth of Sick Days. For example, if the child attends two days per week, they have two Sick Days. If the child is absent due to illness, the Sick Days will be refunded in the next month's billing cycle.

Vacation Days Each child will have two weeks worth of Half Tuition Vacation Days. For example, if the child attends two days a week they would have four Vacation Days available. Vacation Days must be scheduled prior to the billing cycle they fall into.

Deposit A two week deposit will be held to cover the cost of the last two weeks of care.

Tuition Payment

Tuition will be paid on or before the 27th of the month prior to services. Invoices will be sent on the 20th to allow one week for payment.

A \$10 per day late fee from due date to date paid, plus legal/bank fees if applicable, will be charged. Full payment must be received before the student may again attend The Meadow.

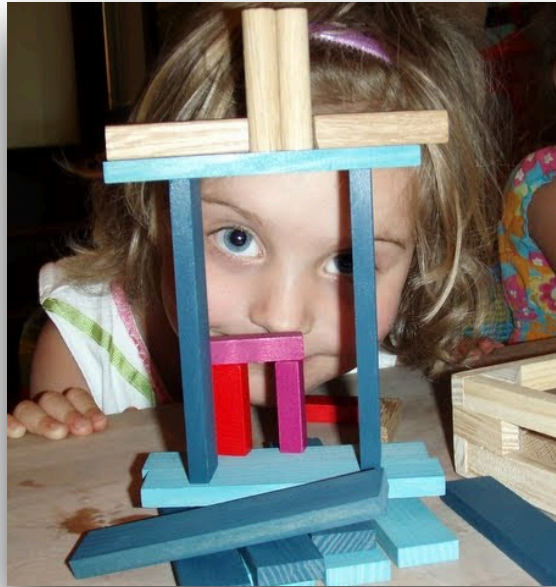
Students must attend a minimum of two days per week unless unavailable.

Parent/Guardian will not be charged for Federal Holidays when The Meadow is closed.

Parent/Guardian will be responsible for two weeks, paid vacation usually occurring (1st) one week during Winter Holidays and (2nd) one week during Spring Break.

Please understand that when The Meadow is closed for vacation and holidays, I am taking this time to rest and be with my family or just catch up on my home duties or appointments. My job is extremely important to me, and to do it to the best of my ability, I need time to care for myself, maintain my energy, plan and prepare for the preschool.

I also must reserve the right to close The Meadow for any reason where it would not be safe to operate, such as a loss of heating or cooling, loss of electricity or water, or any medical emergency. You will not be charged in these type of circumstances.



Typical Daily Routine

7:30 - 9:00 Arrival, Invitation (a new activity that invites children to play), Free Choice

9:00 - 9:45 Circle Time that may consist of Thematic Study, Math and Science Games, Song and Dance, Exercise, and Art.

9:45 - 10:00 Snack Time

10:00 - 12:00 Outside Time

12:00 - 12:30 Lunch

12:30 Half Day Pick Up

1:00 - 3:00 Nap/Rest Time

3:00 - 3:15 Snack Time

4:00 - 5:00 Outdoor Time, Weather Permitting or Free Choice Indoors

5:00 Pick Up

*Your child is released to my care after you leave the premises in the morning, and is released to your care when you step into the classroom at pick up time.

Snacks

Snacks are served twice a day, at approximately 10am and 3pm. Whenever possible I let children participate in preparing their own meals. I do my best to include fresh, organic fruits, vegetables and whole grains every day.

Sample Snack Menu

Monday

AM Oatmeal with berries

PM Edamame with sticky brown rice balls and soy dipping sauce

Tuesday

AM Whole grain bagel with cream cheese and cucumber slices

PM Rice cake with peanut butter, raisins and apple slices

Wednesday

AM Whole grain zucchini bread with orange slices

PM Yogurt with berries

Thursday

AM Whole grain waffle with banana

PM Red pepper, cucumber and carrot sticks with hummus dip



Activities

Activities may include but are not limited to:

Story Time

Hiking

Field Trips

Self Care

Fine Motor Skill Activities

Gymnastics

Art

Construction

Beginning ASL and other Languages

Music and Movement

Dramatic Play

Gardening

Mathematical Games

Scientific Experiments

Thematic Studies

Yoga

Cooking

Tai Chi

Biking

Snowshoeing

Author Studies

Instruments

What To Bring

Label everything with your child's name!

Lunch: You supply your child's delicious, nutritious, high quality lunch. Each child's lunch will be put on a plate and utensils will be provided. I do not have a microwave. Please send hot foods preheated in a thermos. I do have a small toaster oven and can heat things if presented in a heat proof container. I do have a small refrigerator, but please send refrigerated items with an ice pack.

Label everything with your child's name!

Napping Gear: You supply your child's napping gear consisting of a child sized sleeping bag with pillow or a sleep mat with pillow and blanket. They may also bring a "snuggly", a soft, silent doll or animal, for nap time only.

Label everything with your child's name!

Clothing: The parent/guardian must provide appropriate, well fitting, seasonal clothing and shoes (no laces!), including two full sets of backup clothing, at all times (top, bottom, underwear and socks). Students do not wear outside shoes indoors and may bring slippers to wear inside.

We are outside as much as possible every day! So here is what we need!

Winter Gear must consist of (1) waterproof, well insulated well fitting snow boots (look for rubber boots with draw string at the top), (2) waterproof, well fitting snowsuit with hood or a hat (I love one piece snowsuits! Heel straps keep pant legs down and snow out! If you can't find a snowsuit with heel straps, I can show you how to add them!, and (3) waterproof, well fitting, insulated mittens with long cuffs, such as Elbow Mittens.

For Spring, Summer and Fall, all students will need (1) well fitting shoes with good traction and no laces, (2) a pair of sturdy overalls is required! These go on over their everyday clothes protecting not only their favorite outfit, but bottoms, shins and knees as well.

Label everything with your child's name!

Sunscreen: Each child will need sunscreen applied to all exposed areas (don't forget shoulders and arms if wearing a long sleeve that may be removed with a short sleeve or tank top underneath!) before drop off. I will reapply before going outside again in the afternoon.

Label everything with your child's name!

Water Bottle: Please bring a closable, leakproof, dishwasher safe water bottle. I recommend one with a straw. This can be left at The Meadow and I will wash each day.

Label everything with your child's name!

All these personal items can be left at The Meadow in the child's cubby.

What to Leave at Home: Everything else!

Illness Policy

A child may not attend preschool with any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent, deep, chesty, or wet cough
- Difficulty breathing, wheezing
- Rash
- Colored discharge from eyes, ears or nose
- Lice
- Any infectious disease such as chicken pox or strep throat
- Any symptom that would make them unable to participate in the preschool activities



Your child may return to preschool 24 hours after symptoms end or with a doctor's note.

If your child has been exposed to COVID they must isolate immediately and be tested five full days after exposure. If test is negative and there are no symptoms, your child may return to preschool. However, if there are ANY symptoms presenting, your child must remain in isolation and test again a full ten days after exposure.

If your child tests positive for COVID but shows no symptoms, they must isolate for a minimum of five days. If symptoms are present, they must isolate for five days and until twenty-four hours after symptoms end.

Current vaccination records, yearly physician's physical (Well Child Visit), and current doctor/dentist contact information must be on file at all times.

Injuries

I supervise children closely, however, accidents do occur. Hugs and bandaids take care of most childhood injuries and you will be informed of any incident at pick-up time. However, in the event of a more serious injury, I will follow my training from my First Aide and CPR Certification, contact the appropriate emergency entity (911), and contact you, the parent/guardian immediately.

Please be sure to have current contact information on file, as well as the Consent to Treat form.

Administration of Medications

Any non-ingestible, over the counter products such as diaper rash creams, bug sprays or sun screens must be accompanied by a signed Over The Counter permission form.

Any prescription or oral medication must be accompanied by a signed Medication Authorization Form and will be logged on a Medication Log form.

For any chronic illnesses, a Health Care Medication Plan must be on file for the child.

Emergency Plan

In the event that there is an emergency, The Meadow is equipped with materials for a short term evacuation of up to six hours, and a long term shelter in place situation for up to seventy two hours. Food, water, blankets, activities and other necessities are on hand.

There are three ways to safely exit The Meadow's play room: (1) Through the entrance door into the play yard, (2) Up the stairs, out the front door, down stairs into driveway, (3) Through the mudroom, out the front door and into driveway.

Emergency drills, including fire drill, evacuation drill, and shelter in place drill will be practiced randomly once a month.

In the unlikely, rare event that we would need to evacuate The Meadow, the children would be transported as safely as possible either with Emergency Personnel or in my personal vehicle to Mission Valley Church of Christ located at 40523 White Tail Drive, approximately 3.5 miles from The Meadow, south on I-93. You would be notified immediately and be able to pick up your child there. An alternative evacuation site is the Polson High School located at 1712 2nd Street W., in Polson.

Fire extinguishers (3) and smoke/carbon monoxide detectors (5) will be checked for charge and batteries in January and July.

First aide kits (2), emergency evacuation kit and shelter in place kit will also be checked and replenished in January and July of each year.



Transportation Policies

Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation of their children to and from The Meadow. All laws must be followed, especially the speed limit law within the Jette Meadows neighborhood. More than one violation of the 25 MPH speed limit within the Jette Meadows neighborhood will be cause for termination of care.

When entering The Meadow driveway, please observe a 10 MPH speed limit and watch carefully for children and other wildlife. Loop to the right and park so that other vehicles can easily pass. The Meadow is a NO IDLE ZONE. Never leave your vehicle running while unattended.

Except in the event of an emergency, I will never transport children in a motorized vehicle.

In the case of a Field Trip, I will ask for parent/guardian volunteer drivers and obtain written permission to transport each student. Parent/guardians would then be asked to leave a labeled car or booster seat on the date of the field trip for the safe transport of each child.

Challenging Behaviors

All children go through phases of challenging behaviors. It is our job as parents and care givers to be consistent in our responses.

Here at The Meadow, we have one rule, “Be safe, Be Kind!” If a child is, lets say, poking a peer, I describe what I am seeing, “I see you are poking your friend with a crayon, it looks like it hurts,” and I ask them, “Are you being kind?” If the answer is “No”, I ask, “Then how can you fix it?” We can then discuss how to take care of their friend *and* get what they want. If the answer is “Yes”, I ask, “How? How is hurting your friend kind?” We can go on to discuss, with their friend, how it feels to be poked, *Is* it kind, and how to fix the situation with possibly a hug, an apology, or an invitation to play! This type of behavioral questioning gives children a chance to reflect on their behavior and put words to their physical actions and emotions. This leads to better communication and strategies they can use to have their needs met.

At times, kids get angry and frustrated to the point where they lash out, hitting, biting or with other destructive behavior. Sometimes they are incapable of talking about what has happened, unable to make solid choices at the time. At that point I still describe what I am seeing, and calmly remove the child from the situation, focusing then on the peer that may be hurt. For example, a child bites a peer while trying to get a toy. I may say, “I see you’re biting, that hurts, I’m moving you away!” And to the other child, “Show me where it hurts” Later, we can revisit the situation, role play, or use puppets to reenact the situation and come up with better solutions to the problem.

If your child is frequently and deliberately causing harm to others or is being destructive, you will be notified and together we will make a behavior plan. If harmful or destructive behavior does not improve within the decided period of time, it will be grounds for termination of care at The Meadow.

Changes to Contract, Policies or to Terminate Care

Any changes to these procedures, your contract, or for you to terminate your contract must be put in writing and published between all interested parties two weeks before going into effect.

Child Care Licensing

If you have questions or concerns about the licensing of The Meadow, you can find information at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/childcarelicensing>.



As I read *Roxaboxen* (picture book by Alice McLerran, illustrated by Barbara Cooney) to a classroom of peers while taking a children's literature class in college, I realized I needed to be reading to children.

From that moment on I took steps to clear my path to the classroom, finding the importance of outdoor education, play, brain development, and holistic education along the way.

I graduated from Arizona State University in 1995 from the then pilot program, *Teaching for a Diverse Future*, which focused on bilingual and holistic education while including fine arts, physical education as well as social/emotional growth.

I then worked while traveling through the Caribbean, Central and South America for two plus years before returning to Arizona to teach K-8 in the Roosevelt School District at Valley View Elementary, an Expeditionary Learning School. This was a place where children learned with purpose; things like how to write, film, produce, and act in public service announcements. They learned how to make dug out canoes, straw bale structures, pottery and grow produce that was served at the cafeteria salad bar while conquering traditional subjects as well.

In 2003 I found myself pregnant and living in Truckee, California. I opened Papoose Infant Care where I cared for infants along side my own, eventually expanding to include preschoolers and monthly parent education evenings. With parents on board applying consistent practices at home and in the classroom, play based curriculum and 95% outdoors, children thrived. When it was time for my son to go to first grade, a group of parents, including myself founded Sierra Expeditionary Learning School; a free, district sponsored charter that employed the same principles as Papoose.

When life took me in another direction again in 2020, I found myself in Reno, Nevada, still learning, still striving to do what's best for children. Along with colleague, Limitless ALC, a self directed home school program, was opened, where children would be heard, valued, and supported in their individual educational journey.

I now offer you The Meadow, where children can grow, learning in a peaceful, natural environment. More than ever, children and their families need inspiration, encouragement, support and solid educational practices in order to thrive in our challenging, ever changing society. I feel confident that I am able to listen, decipher and deliver what children need to succeed.

Thank you for choosing The Meadow for your preschooler's care and education.

Dana Mudd