

The Children's Depot Playschool



Parent Handbook 2024/2025

Last updated 5/19/24

We offer a child-centered and developmentally appropriate program for two and three-year old children. The Children's Depot Playschool implements the play-based learning framework ur own blend of fitness and wellness for children focusing all areas of child development – social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language, indoors and outdoors.

Play allows children to learn about the work and themselves. As children play, they learn new skills, develop coping mechanisms, test new ideas, and master their bodies. As children make choices about where to play in the classroom, they are learning a variety of skills. For example, building with blocks promotes material explorations, as well as spatial planning, symbolic representation, dramatic play, and social interactions. In the area of art, teachers emphasize the process rather than the finished product. As children use art materials, they are planning and carrying out a task and also using symbols to represent their ideas.

Our play-based multi-sensory curriculum offers children many opportunities for positive interactions with other children and adults. We treat each child with respect and reinforce his/her value as an individual and as a unique member of the Children's Depot Playschool and Wave community.

We believe that building a team which includes teachers, child, parents and community will provide a sound educational foundation for your child.

The Children's Depot Playschool promotes an environment where children become independent, confident, early learners with a strong sense of self. We proudly offer a positive, child-centered preschool experience that fosters a love of learning in a nurturing community. In each child, we strive to cultivate; autonomy, a sense of belonging, respect for others and enthusiasm for exploration. Please take the time to review our class offerings and fees below.

Philosophy & Curriculum

We believe that building a team which includes teacher, child, parent and community will provide a sound educational foundation for your child.

Playschool promotes an environment where children become independent, confident, lifelong learners with a strong sense of self. We proudly offer a positive, child-centered learning experience that fosters a love of learning in a nurturing community. In each child, we strive to cultivate: •

Autonomy

- A sense of belonging
- Respect for others
- Enthusiasm for exploration

Our Curriculum

We offer a child-centered and developmentally appropriate program for two through four year old children. The multi-sensory curriculum has been integrated with our own blend of fitness and wellness for children.

Every week we learn a new

- Letter
- Number
- Word
- Color
- Shape
- Sing-along songs

Staff Qualifications

Our staff members meet the following qualifications:

- Passed a background check.
- CPR – Adult and Infant
- First Aid
- Familiar with Montana State Regulations in childcare.
- Previous experience in a childcare or elementary educational setting preferred.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

We are a nonsectarian playschool. The Children's Depot Playschool admits students of any race, color, religion, and national and ethnic origin to all rights privileges, programs and activities and does not discriminate in administration of its educational and admission policies.

Closures

We may close due to illness, on inclement weather days, in an unexpected event, or in which the Whitefish School District closes. Any event as such, we will send out information via text Class Dojo or email, as well as post this information on our Facebook page. We do not offer refunds or day trades due to on any types of closures.

Tuition Charges

Tuition is withdrawn monthly for all weekly contracted days, regardless of holidays, illness, snow days, or vacations and closures (planned and unplanned). There are no refunds, credits, or day exchanges.

Birthday Celebration

We recognize that a child's birthday is an important time in a child's life. You are welcome to bring a small treat for the class to help your child celebrate their special day. We ask that you arrange this with the teacher beforehand as there may be allergy specific requirements.

Child Specific Information

During arrival and dismissal times, staff members must devote full attention to all of the children and each specific need. Please keep conversations brief. If you need to communicate specific information, a written note or email is preferred.

- Please call Autumn's direct line (406) 730-6171 or The Wave (406) 862-2444 and ask for The Children's Depot. In the case of emergency please notify The Wave's Service Desk
- Please share pertinent information with the teachers regarding your child or any situations that may affect your child so we can be sensitive to any changes in behaviors or family dynamics. Privacy will always be respected.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. We take this issue very seriously and will make every effort to protect each family's privacy. Communications among staff and parents about children will be kept confidential at all times. It is recommended that conversations about a child, behavior, or incident should be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the preschool community. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest the parent first contact the teacher via email.

Communication

Communication is vital to a successful school program. We strive to make communication open and clear to all. Here are a few ways you can expect us to relay information:

- Email
- Cell Phone
- Class Dojo
- Notices sent home with child

Drop Off/Pick-Up

Never leave your child alone inside or outside of the building. We require all children to be checked in by an adult, and met by a teacher at the gate for drop off. We require all children to be picked up by an adult after our program finishes for the day. Any early drop offs or late pickups need to be arranged with a Children's Depot staff member. Time your child is in the facility before or after class must be charged to a Children's Depot punch card. Punch cards are charged by the half hour.

Authorization

Each parent is asked to give specific individuals permission to pick their child up. Parents **MUST** give authorization either in person or by phone each and every time their child is picked up by an unauthorized adult, not listed on your registration form. We want to ensure safe transport for your child. If our staff members observe an authorized individual and have a reasonable cause to suspect that the individual is under the influence, or physically impaired in any way that may endanger the child, the staff may have cause to refuse to release the child until another authorized adult can pick the child up.

Late Arrival

Please be considerate and try to arrive on time. We ask that all children are dropped off between 8:30 – 9:00 am. In case of late arrival, please inform The Children's Depot and be respectful of what is going on in the classroom.

Absences

Please notify us by 9:00am, if your child is not attending for the day. A voicemail may be left on The Children's Depot voicemail. Inform us about any or all illnesses/health concerns. Teachers and students miss a child when they are gone and want to know everything is OK. Because of our tuition policy and staffing regulations, absences are not credited and swapping of days is not allowed. **IF YOUR CHILD IS NOT WELL ENOUGH TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE DAILY SCHEDULE, PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME.**

Well Child Policy

We work hard to prevent childhood illness. If children come to a school when they are not feeling well, they will be more vulnerable to infection and to getting sick. It is in the best interest of your child and of the other children to keep your child at home when he/she is ill.

Children need to be well in order to be able to participate actively in our program; however, The Wave recognizes that in some cases children who are not contagious will attend the program when they are not functioning at their best. For the protection of other children and our staff, we rely on the thoughtfulness of each parent's assessment of their child. Our staff reserves the right to refuse to admit any child that is ill. Please refer to the following guidelines to help determine an ill child.

24 HOUR RULE: ANY CHILD WHO HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF ILLNESS IN THE PREVIOUS 24 HOURS MAY NOT ATTEND CLASS.

- **Fever:** Child must be free of elevated temperature (over 100.3) for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to Playschool.
- **Diarrhea:** Has diarrhea or nausea in the last 24 hours defined as loose, very watery or mucus filled stools.
- **Cold:** Discharge from eyes, or a profuse nasal discharge, a cough with mucus secretions.
- **Rash:** A contagious disease (rashes of any sorts or bacterial infections).
- **Antibiotic Time Line:** A child should be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

If diagnosed with a communicable disease, including Strep Throat, Pink Eye, Lice, Covid or any other common disease in a school environment, please let the teacher know. We will not release the child's name, but in case of an outbreak, it is important for us to note if other kids are being infected. In large outbreak cases, we may post that there has been a case of _____ reported for all other parents to be aware of, and follow all other contact tracing and potential classroom closure protocol.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is an important part of your child's physical development and is included in the daily routine of Playschool. Toilet training can only begin when there are definite signs and the child has the ability to communicate this to the parent and staff. This training should be a cooperative and consistent effort between home and playschool.

Children newly toilet trained will be reminded hourly to try to use the bathroom. A pull-up will be put on 15 minutes before nap time and removed when they wake up.

Emergencies

Each child's program has an emergency procedure plan in place.

Medical Treatment

It is important for parents to keep their consent for medical treatment and emergency contact information up to date.

In the event the parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to give permission for our staff to provide basic first aid to your child. However, parents understand that we shall not be required to strictly follow those guidelines when, in its judgement, circumstances may require otherwise.

In the event that our staff in their sole discretion, believes that a child needs more advanced care, and the emergency contact from your registration form cannot be reached, parents must consent to dental, medical, surgical, and/or hospital care, treatment and/or procedures to be performed for your child by a licensed dentist, physician, ambulance attendant/emergency medical technician, or other licensed health care provider (collectively, "Health Care Professional") associated with a licensed treatment facility when deemed necessary or advisable by the Health Care Professional to safeguard your child's health. The parent waives their right of informed consent to such treatment. A staff member will stay with your child until contact with authorized personnel is made.

Communication with Parents of an Emergency Situation

Communication with parents during an emergency will be made through either a text message sent to cell phones and/or a phone call from a member of our staff and/or email. If possible, staff will leave a message on The Children's Depot door.

Emergency Phone Contact Information for Each Child

Emergency phone numbers and email lists will be maintained to notify parents of any unexpected events, such as a school closing or an evacuation. The *Emergency Form* will be supplied during the enrollment process. This form must be completed and returned to the office before the child's first day of class.

- The *Emergency Form* includes the name and phone number of the child's local physician. Our staff has the right to call the physician or other emergency personnel in case of an emergency. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep emergency information up to date.

Shelter and Evacuation Sites and Plans

Our shelter and evacuation site is the Whitefish Police Department located just up the block at 275 Flathead Ave, Whitefish, MT 59937.

Positive Discipline Policy

We are committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all children. The school's behavior policy encourages children to develop social skills that reflect many of our values, including self-control, respect for others, and a positive self-esteem.

Teachers model appropriate behavior and guide positive interactions among children and adults. Nurturing these social skills helps children grow as successful, lifelong learners.

Our commitment to an age-appropriate and play-based curriculum ensures that activities are child centered and promote positive social interactions. Teachers craft the environment, communicate and enforce clear boundaries and expectations for behavior, and use nonverbal cues and/or redirect a child's behavior to foster success.

When a problem arises, the teacher relies on modeling appropriate behavior, teaching peacemaking skills, and presenting stories or scenarios that reinforce the desired behavior. Children learn to make suitable choices and develop techniques for regaining self-control when they feel frustrated. Instructive and individually appropriate consequences help to strengthen the child's self control and self-esteem.

When a child experiences a particularly challenging time, the school encourages parents and teachers to work together and develop appropriate strategies. If a specific circumstance needs attention, the teacher will follow these procedures:

1. The teacher will observe and document a child's behavior.
2. The teacher will discuss the child's behavior with a parent. The teacher will follow up with the parent about how these strategies are influencing the behavior.
3. If concern persists, a conference will be held with the teacher, parent, and director to discuss options to help the child further develop appropriate social skills.
4. Staff members will make reasonable effort to work with the child and his/her family to resolve behavioral concerns. At any time, an individual plan of action may need to be implemented, depending on the severity of the concern. If needed, there is opportunity for teachers and the director to seek support from outside resources. The plan may include removal of a child from the classroom and/or calling the parent to take the child home. Repeated severe problems may result in dismissal from our program.

What to Bring & Dress Code

- Your child should be dressed for active and participatory play. We do not want a child's activity or creativity hampered because he/she is wearing clothing that should not get dirty.
- Your child should wear comfortable shoes that they can independently put on and take off their feet. No sandals or flip flops. Straps or slip-on with rubber soles are recommended. No boots in the classroom, (snow or rain) pack inside shoes daily for your child or leave a pair of shoes for the year in their cubby.
- Children go outside most days, so please dress your child appropriately.
- In the winter, hat and mittens, snow pants and boots are needed every day.

Spare Clothes

Pack 2 full changes of clothes for your child in a gallon zip lock bag, labeled with their name. Should a mess of any kind arise, they will have the option to put on clean clothes.

Lunch and Snack

Parents should send lunch and a snack in a lunch box daily. No juice boxes, chocolate milk or candy. We provide plastic cutlery please do not pack silverware from home.

Please label your child's lunch box clearly with your child's name on the outside of the lunch box. We encourage parents to promote healthy eating habits by sending nutritious items for lunch and snack. Please pack an appropriate amount of food for your child for the day. Lunch and snack time is a time for children to reenergize their bodies and build language and conversational skills.

We ask that children bring a water bottle to your first day of playschool to stay in the classroom for the year. Staff will sanitize water bottles every day they are used.

PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR TEACHER IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY KNOWN ALLERGY.

Personal Belongings

Personal Belongings with the exception of blanket/security objects specifically for nap time, We ask that parents do not send personal toys and belongings from home with a child. Playschool is not responsible for lost or damage to personal belongings.

Enrollment

Enrollment for our fall preschool programs will begin in the spring of each year. Registration first comes available to existing families and members from the prior year. All other registration is accepted on a first come first serve basis. A completed registration packet is necessary for enrollment as well as a non-refundable registration fee which will hold your child's placement in our program.

Immunizations

We require proof of immunizations. Our standards are based on guidelines set by the State of Montana however, we do not allow exceptions for religious reasons.

Registration

All registration forms included in the registration packet must be completed and up to date.

Procedures for Withdrawal

A WRITTEN notice must be received 30 days prior to the first day of the month for cancellation in our program – NO EXCEPTIONS. If you cancel out of our program less than 30 days in advance, you will be charged that month's tuition. We need time to fill each vacant spot.

PLEASE NOTE: On occasion, a program is not an optimal fit for a child or family. We will make every effort to work collaboratively with families to resolve any challenges that arise. Additional resources may need to be used to support a child's success in our preschool environment. If, after all reasonable efforts are exhausted, and a problem cannot be resolved, we reserve the right to dismiss a child from the program. XDcfhujklop

Payment Policy

Payments must be made on time to ensure your child's continued participation in our program. All fees will be drafted on the first of the month via auto pay as indicated during registration. A late fee of \$10 will be assessed for a returned draft.

Photo Policy

As a parent, you have the choice to release your child's photo. We often use Facebook and parent newsletters to communicate and give updates. Completion of our photo release form is required during registration.

Recognition of Handbook

By signing below, I am recognizing that I have received this handbook and am responsible for reading and understanding all of the policies listed here in The Children's Depot Playschool. Please return this portion back to the facility.

Signature _____ 789+9
Print Name _____