



## **West Asheville Playschool Handbook**

### **What makes learning at West Asheville Playschool unique?**

We do month long explorations on a topic (for example: weather, magical creatures, eggs, migration) this gives us the opportunity to really dive into it. Our approach is to integrate our learning goals across all aspects of the classroom. Most importantly, this includes revamping our space, including the dramatic play area each month to connect in with what we are discussing. (airport, post office, animal rescue center) Our main focus is play and we want the children to have the opportunity to creatively explore and investigate what they are learning about.

We draw in a global connection wherever possible and provide the children with opportunities for service in the community. Each year we volunteer at the food bank and help the children raise money to support a cause that connects with our learning. We hold an annual “art show” of the children’s work beautifully displayed to highlight each child’s unique talent. We combine pieces of many different early childhood philosophies including Waldorf, Reggio Emilia and Montessori.

### **The Classroom**

For 23-24 we will have 5 paid teachers and 30 kids.

We have two classrooms serving approximately 15 children per day. Each class runs on a four hour schedule, 8:30-12:30. Because our preschool program operates for only four hours a day, we are not required to be licensed by the NC Division of Child Development. Our day generally consists of a long uninterrupted free play time with creative and exploratory activities available as a choice, snack, circle time, outside play, and lunch. We have enrichments a few days each week such as music, yoga and dance. Parents pick up their children during our lunch period each day.

## Admissions

Admissions priority is given to siblings of current and alumni families. Further selection of children and families is based on our commitment to balance each class by age, gender, and cultural diversity, and to foster a community of families who are enthusiastic about being an inclusive, earth friendly preschool. We do not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or potty training status. Interested families should come visit the school. Fill out the contact form on the website to schedule a visit.

## Fees and Tuition

A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$250 is required of all families to hold your child's place for the upcoming school year. All check or money orders are to be made payable to West Asheville Playschool. Your monthly tuition will go towards teacher pay, the rent and operation of the school facility, insurance and the furnishing of necessary classroom supplies. Field trip costs are not included. A late fee of \$25 per day will be charged for tuition not received on its monthly due date. In the instance that payment (including late fees) is not received by the last day of the month and arrangements have not been made, membership may be revoked by the decision of the director.

**Concerning closures and shut-downs: Once monthly tuition has been paid it will not be reimbursed in case of covid related school closure. Subsequent fees will not be drafted during any closure.**

### Tuition for the 2023-24 school year will be:

4 days per week/\$440 a month

5 days per week/\$500 a month

**Venmo is also an option-Louise Miracle 1**

**You can also use paypal but must account for the fee.**

There will be a 10% tuition discount for an additional child enrolled in the Playschool from one family.

## **Role of the Teaching Parent-Temporarily suspended for the 2023-24 school year**

The paid teachers are the school-day leaders and the parent teachers are to follow their direction. In the event of an absence, she/he will be responsible for finding a substitute for that day. A lead working parent will be identified whenever there is no teacher on site. Working parents should plan to arrive on time and be prepared for the day.

## **Teaching Parent Responsibilities Include**

- Arriving on time as a classroom teacher every other week.

- Assisting the teacher in preparation of activities including completing all tasks listed on the parent teacher checklist posted in the classroom.
- Planning enrichment activities for their teaching days at least once a month. i.e. art project, cooking, sewing, language, building, music etc.
- Supervising children and helping to maintain order throughout the day especially at mealtimes and group times. **No cell phone use during the teaching day.**
- Assisting in clean up at the end of the day, including taking initiative and wiping down areas that are dusty or got painted. Take pride in the appearance of our classroom.
- Sign up for your required work hours to be fulfilled by the end of the school year.
- Remain up to date on all paperwork including current insurance carrier and copy of driver's license.
- Maintaining current CPR certification
- Pay monthly tuition on time

If you do not meet these requirements to the satisfaction of the classroom teachers you may be asked to switch to a non-teaching parent role.

### **Non Teaching Parent Responsibilities/Commitments**

- Remain up to date on all paperwork including current insurance carrier and copy of driver's license if you want to drive on field trips.
- Pay monthly tuition on time
- Fulfill a minimum of 3 hours per school year towards school cleaning or other tasks signed up for at orientation .

### **Field Trips**

Our goal is to take relevant field trips that connect with the explorations we are making in the classroom. Louise is responsible for planning and coordinating field trips, please let us know if you have any great ideas! We will need enough parent volunteers/chaperones to safely transport the playschool children to their destination. If the field trip is to be taken by car, each driver will be responsible for the children that they had in their car for the duration of the field trip. All parents who intend to drive must keep a copy of their car's insurance and driver's license on file in their child's current information folder.

### **Classroom Management**

As working parents, it is important that we teach and model behaviors that encourage communication, sharing and cooperation. Do not make idle threats. If you say you are going to do something, mean it. Keep your word. Consistency and trust are critical to establishing meaningful relationships with children. Always feel comfortable turning over discipline issues or concerning behaviors to the paid teachers in the classroom.

Throughout a child's development, he or she will inevitably behave in ways that may be dangerous, hurtful or otherwise socially unacceptable. To help our children develop appropriate social behaviors, we offer the following proactive disciplinary policy.

**WE:**

1. DO offer positive reinforcement
2. DO Reason with and set clear limits for children
3. DO model appropriate behavior for children
4. DO set up our classroom environment to maximize opportunities for success
5. DO listen to children
6. DO provide alternative activities when inappropriate behaviors occur
7. DO allow children to experience the natural and logical consequences of their actions
8. DO treat the children with respect as people who have feelings, moods, and their own unique experience
9. DO explain things to children in a clear way that they can understand
10. DO use short supervised periods of time out

**WE:**

1. DO NOT spank, shake, bite, pinch, slap or otherwise physically punish a child
2. DO NOT shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur
3. DO NOT make fun of or otherwise belittle the children, their parents, families or ethnic group.

## **Conflict Resolution**

1. Redirection: By keeping the children involved in activities that interest them, we can often prevent situations from arising that require further intervention. Also, by ensuring that the children are adequately supervised, situations can be dissipated before they escalate.
2. We can teach the children to resolve their own disputes by taking advantage of opportunities that arise in which we can guide them to peaceful cooperation. If a child pushes another child that is trying to take a toy from them we can walk them through how the same thing could have been accomplished by using words to say, "I am having a turn with this right now. You may have a turn in 2 minutes." This helps show the child that he/she is entitled to hold on to the toy that she/he was playing with, and that he/she can use words to help the other child to accept this. Communication is the key!
3. Separation and Information: Unacceptable behavior sometimes occurs. When it does, the adult's action should be appropriate to the age of the child and follow these guidelines: Behaviors that absolutely require intervention are hitting, pushing and biting. When this occurs, the child should first be stopped from inflicting harm to others. If one child is hitting another, stop the child non-violently. For example, you could pick up the child being hit, make sure they are o.k. and remove them from the reach of the child who hit them.

This is often preferable to removing the child who is hitting, because it does not reinforce the behavior with negative attention. Tell the child who hit, in a firm manner, that what they did is unacceptable. Refrain from judging the child (i.e. don't ever tell a child that he or she is bad – only that their behavior is not allowed). If you know what brought about the hitting suggest an alternative behavior that would have been acceptable. For example, we encourage the children to use their words to tell other children to stop their offending behavior instead of hitting them. In general, when a child is playing with a toy and another child tries to take it, we tell the second child that they will have to wait – when the first child has had 2 minutes with it they can have a turn. We might also offer another toy as a substitute.

4. Time out on the is a short, supervised time when a child has been removed from the group and given the opportunity to reflect upon his or her actions. Time out is generally used only after other behavior management techniques such as redirection have been tried. Each child and circumstance is different and will evoke a different response. Use your own judgment. If something is unsafe, don't allow it.
5. Corporal punishment and verbal abuse are never options. We believe that at these ages, children can only understand clear, immediate and logical consequences of inappropriate behavior.

## **Policies and Other Useful Information**

### **What to Bring to School**

- A healthy box lunch, snack, utensils if needed and a full water bottle to drink, we would like to limit the amount of throwaway objects in the kids' lunches. i.e. send food in reusable containers rather than throw away bags.
- A change of clothes including underwear (several changes if potty training). Please make sure that these are appropriate for the current season, and during cold weather pack hats and gloves.
- Diapers and wipes (if needed), cloth diapers are fine as long as a plastic bag is included to keep dirty diapers in.

### **Safety Indoors**

The following are safety guidelines for teaching parents to follow:

- Children should not open the doors to go outside unless with an adult
- Children should stay in designated rooms and not be allowed to wander
- No running
- No rough play, including children laying on top of one other or imaginary weapons.

## **Outside/Playground Rules**

- No throwing sand or woodchips
- No climbing UP the slide
- Bike riding only on the safe side of the cones

## **Emergency Preparedness**

**CPR:** It is mandatory for teaching parents and paid teachers that they complete a formal CPR and choking training course for infants and children by the end of October each year. An effort will be made to schedule this training as a group.

**First Aid:** A first-aid kit is available in 2 of the 3 bathrooms. Teaching parents should familiarize themselves with the contents.

**Fire Safety:** Fire safety procedures will be reviewed with the children and teaching parents. We have a fire drill each month. A fire extinguisher is located in the classroom.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the Buncombe County School closures. If Buncombe County Schools are closed we will be closed. If, however, Buncombe County Schools are delayed by one or two hours, WAP will remain open and operating on its regular schedule.

**Immunizations:** We leave decisions regarding childhood immunizations up to each child's parents.

**Illness Policy:** Our illness policy has been developed to establish a consistent guideline for our playschool families to follow. Our goal is to decrease the amount of illness spread from one child to another. One child's illness can affect the group as a whole so it is important to keep your child home if he or she has one of the following symptoms/illnesses:

- Fever (100° or higher)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Flu
- Unusual rash
- Severe cold
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Head lice
- Contagious illness of any sort
- Too ill or fatigued to participate in daily activities

WAP will not accept a child for care if the above symptoms are present or have been present within the last 24 hours. If the child shows any of the above symptoms while in care, we will remove the child from the group and notify the parent or authorized adult to pick up the child.

The child may return 24 hours after a temperature has returned to normal, 24 hours after the child is no longer vomiting or after the duration of the illness has passed. If there is any doubt, please contact a teacher to discuss.

Likewise, teaching parents should stay home if it is their teaching day and they:

- have had a fever within the past 24 hours
- have vomited or had diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- are feeling ill and may be unable to perform your work duties
- have a contagious condition
- have a rash or other significant symptom

Note: Parents should report any attendance changes to Louise or Samantha by phone, as soon as possible.

**Medications Policy:** The teacher will administer emergency medications only (ex. asthma or allergic reactions). All medications must be brought in original containers. Parents will be required to fill out administration of medication release and dosage form for the medication. Hand medications directly to the working teacher with the signed medication form. If you would like your child to wear sunscreen/mosquito repellent on the playground, please apply it before sending him/her to school.

## **Policy on Child Abuse and Neglect**

### **Definitions:**

*Abuse* occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. Abuse may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. Sexual abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, intercourse, incest, rape, sodomy, exhibitionism, and commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

*Neglect* occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline, or when a child is abandoned.

### **Reporting:**

North Carolina law *requires* any person who suspects child abuse or neglect to report the case to the county department of social services (250-5900 during business hours/252-4357 or 211 evenings, weekends, or holidays). In addition, any person can call the Division of Child Development at 919-662-4499 or 1-800-859-0829 and make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect in a child care operation. Reports can be made anonymously. A person

cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, you can make a confidential report to the Director or Communications Coordinator or make an anonymous report by contacting the numbers listed above.

**Green Program:** As we aid our children in learning compassion towards others in our community and classroom we also integrate in our daily actions a consciousness towards responsible use of resources and materials and a strong awareness of our relationship to our natural environment. We see eco-sensitivity as an important tenet of our school. The choices that we make as parents and teachers have a great impact on our children's future, and the choices that they will make later in life.

We will offer an environmental emphasis by focusing activities on subjects that will interest the children in the natural world and help them to understand their place in it. This may include gardening activities, paper making, composting and field trips into our natural community. We will strive to make all decisions regarding the day to day administration of WAP with deliberate intention towards resource consciousness. This will include:

- Printing on scrap paper or double siding on recycled paper or not printing at all and posting on the website.
- Never using disposable dishes or napkins for eating.
- Encouraging carpooling, biking and walking to school whenever possible.
- Using recycled materials for art activities whenever possible.
- Attempting to maintain classroom environment through materials donated, purchased secondhand or made from found materials.
- When we do have to purchase things new, searching out local resources.
- Responsible use of water in hand washing and water play including our own rain barrel.
- Using electricity powered by our Solar Panels.
- Maintaining an awareness of heating and cooling so as not to open the windows if the heat is on or use air conditioning when not necessary etc.

In doing so we hope to turn the children on to a way of being in the world that does not take what we have for granted and encourages responsible use of resources. We strive to introduce environmental education to young children in a way that engages them, intrigues them, and creates an empathy and respect for all living things and their habitats. We hope to provide even our youngest children not only with a gentle awareness of their impact on the world around them, but also an empowering understanding of how they can make a positive difference.

We also believe that the most valuable way that the children will learn to be responsible with our resources and make earth-friendly choices is through the example and immersion of these types of discussions and choices in their home and daily lives. This needs to be a family choice to raise our children with an awareness of the effect they have on the planet



and SHOW them through our own daily spending and conscious efforts how they can effect change.

## Communication

Making sure that families have all the information they need and feel comfortable expressing their needs and concerns is vitally important to the success of our preschool.

**Child Folder:** Each child has a folder with his/her name on the cover. This folder contains all necessary paperwork and emergency information for each family and is kept in the kitchen.

**Facebook page:** We have a private group facebook page. This is used to share information, photos and help each other as a community. We try to post pictures and updates on this page weekly.

**West Asheville Playschool Website:** We have a website [www.westashevilleplayschool.com](http://www.westashevilleplayschool.com) with basic information provided.

**Orientation:** At the beginning of each school year there will be an open house orientation where you can familiarize you and your child with the space, meet the teachers and ask questions, get to know other families that will be attending and watch an informational slideshow.

**Our Vision:** The WAP provides a safe and nurturing, structured environment for children 3 to 5 years old. We encourage a respect for self, others and nature while providing a classroom environment where our children can develop their imaginations and explore their interests. Striving to create an inclusive environment the WAP welcomes families of all social backgrounds and children of all different abilities. Parents assist our professional teachers in the classroom on a rotating basis and participate in the educational program of all the children. Parents, preschool children and their teachers all go to school together and learn together. Our preschool is a place where we can all re-learn those qualities which we want our children to embody... empathy, generosity, thoughtfulness, honesty, responsibility and independence in thought and action. In this endeavor lots of hands make light work and we all jump in to help where there is a job to do. Together we sort things through by talking in an honest way, admitting our mistakes and apologizing when the need arises. This is a great thing we do... working in cooperation to help our children grow to be good people and teaching each other along the way.