



# Cottonwood Preschool Parent Handbook

## **Required reading for families enrolling**

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This handbook was prepared to introduce parents to Cottonwood Preschool, and to the responsibilities we jointly assume in creating an optimal learning environment for our preschoolers. The success of our program depends upon the cooperative efforts of parents and staff. Please read this handbook carefully.

(Revised January 29, 2015)

# School History and Philosophy

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Cottonwood Preschool is a non-profit corporation, founded in 1981 by a group of dedicated parents who identified a need for a pre-school program that was different than others in the Littleton area. These parents imagined a preschool where their cooperative efforts could create a stimulating and exciting learning environment for their children. They created a school where parents could play a direct role in their child's education.

Today, Cottonwood Preschool is one of a handful of parent cooperative preschools in the Denver area. We continue to have a very dedicated group of parents who are committed to carrying on the tradition of excellence at Cottonwood.

Cottonwood embraces a developmental, play-based philosophy of learning, which supports and respects the child as he/she is. Cottonwood supports the knowledge that children learn best through play and hands-on experiences. Through the guidance of carefully selected teachers, the child will have the opportunity to explore and enrich his/her world socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually toward optimal growth.



*“...founded in 1981  
by a group of  
parents  
...Cottonwood  
embraces a  
developmental  
philosophy of  
learning”*

# Parent Participation

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Cottonwood Preschool recognizes the parent as the child's first and most important teacher and supports this role by providing opportunities for parents to participate in the education of their children.



Parent participation preschools are unique. When parents and teachers work together, the link between home and school is strengthened.

- For children, parent involvement demonstrates that education and school experiences are valued.
- For teachers, the varied talents and support of our parents enrich our classroom environment and reduce our adult/child ratio.
- For parents, classroom participation provides an opportunity to gain insight and understanding of child development and supports the development of parenting skills useful in everyday interactions with children.

Parent participation means a greater investment and greater return. The cooperative efforts of parents and teachers working together provide the best learning environment for young children.

The success of Cottonwood Preschool is a direct result of all parents fulfilling their responsibilities as listed below:

1. Serve as a helping parent in the classroom on a rotating basis. Frequency is determined by the number of students in the class. A typical helping parent rotation is about twice a month. Each session has one to two helping parents per session, depending on class size.
2. Arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of class and plan to stay 30 minutes after class to help with clean-up.
3. Provide a healthy snack for your class on helping parent days.
4. Serve as a member of the Parent Board of Directors or on a standing committee at Cottonwood.
5. Attend monthly Parent Meetings. (August Orientation Meeting, October Class-Curriculum Meeting and Spring General Meeting are required.)
6. Actively participate in all fund-raising projects. Our current





fundraisers are the annual Auction and Monthly Grocery Certificates. Each family is *required* to purchase or reload gift cards to equal a face value of \$350 a month or pay \$17.50 a month for the buyout option. For the auction each family is *required* to raise \$250 in donated items to be auctioned at our function. In

addition to these two fundraisers, we often have an optional event or two throughout the year, such as a garage sale.

7. Participate in a Parent Workday (a 2 hour block of time once per year) to help with set-up and cleaning of the school.
8. Serve as a driver and attend field trips as needed.
9. Submit all forms and pay tuition and fees on time.



*“Parent participation means a greater investment and greater return.”*

# Curriculum

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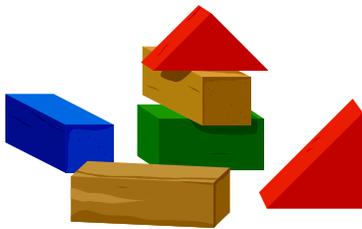
Cottonwood embraces a developmental, play based philosophy of learning, which respects each child as a unique individual, and supports the knowledge that young children learn best through play and hands-on experiences.

Through daily classroom activity we strive to maintain a **BALANCE** between:

- Child-directed & teacher directed activity
- Structure & flexibility
- Group needs & individual needs
- Security & risk-taking
- Familiarity & challenge

## Daily activity offering always includes:

- Creative Arts
- Blocks
- Dramatic Play
- Sensory Materials
- Manipulatives
- Science
- Literature
- Music & Movement
- Snacks
- Outdoor Play and Nature Education



# Curriculum cont'd

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At Cottonwood, our curriculum is...

- **Developmental** Children's learning and skill acquisition is by nature, but develops at *the child's own pace*. Each child is respected and supported at each stage of development as they progress toward their own goals and potential.
- **Play-based** Play is the child's natural process for learning and development. Within play's natural learning environment children develop socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.
- **Child-directed** Children learn best when they have some control over their learning, when activities are meaningful and relevant, and when they make choices regarding what materials they use and how and where they will use them. These choices empower children to take control of their own learning and to become intrinsically motivated – the most effective and engaging way to learn.
- **Teacher-supported** Rather than a dispenser of knowledge, the teacher is primarily a facilitator enabling the child to learn from his/her own experience. The teacher prepares a nurturing environment, a wide variety of materials and activity, and ample opportunity to explore.
- **Integrated** Curriculum includes all parts of the preschool day, including arrival, routines, care taking transitions, and departure as well as planned activities and spontaneous play. Learning occurs in all areas of the classroom and is not an isolated event, drill, or activity.
- **Emergent** Curriculum is created daily as the children's interests and ideas are freely explored. When encouraged to make their own choices, explore their own ideas, and to follow their own interests, children are involved in the real process of discovering knowledge.



*Concept development and skill acquisition occur naturally through everyday activity, which is relevant, meaningful and enjoyable for the child*



# Policies and Procedures

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## **Enrollment Procedures**

**Waiting List:** We maintain a waiting list for families interested in our school. There is no financial obligation to be put on the waiting list. Benefits of being on the waiting list are: Priority Enrollment opening in January, inclusion in all of Cottonwood's social events and parent education. The waiting list privileges expire the first Saturday in February the year that your child is eligible to begin school.

Cottonwood accepts students from ages 2 yrs-9mo through 5 years in conformance with licensing regulations. Classroom size is 10 or less children at a time. If a class has enrolled less than 5 children, Cottonwood will consider terminating the class in the best interest of the school. Any determination of class closure will be made prior to August 1.

Applications and a yearly registration fee per child shall be submitted prior to consideration of admission. Students who are currently enrolled, their siblings, waitlisted families and alumni shall have priority admission for the following year if enrolled prior to the established deadline. There will be a lottery for any class with more applications than spaces. Enrollment is open on the date of the scheduled Open House (the first Saturday in February) and applications are taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Once classes begin, children will be accepted at the discretion of the Director and in consultation with the classroom teacher.

In compliance with licensing regulations, registration and emergency forms must be received prior to any child's admission to the classroom. All other health and immunization records shall be submitted at this time as well. Children whose forms have not been received by the designated deadline may be excluded from the classroom until such forms have been received.

The first month of school is considered a probationary period. If it becomes evident during this period that the relationship between the school and the family is not mutually beneficial, the child may be dropped from school enrollment. In the event a child is dropped from enrollment, tuition costs will be pro-rated and a refund will be given if applicable.

If at any time, either the parent or the school feels that the relationship between school and family is not mutually beneficial, either party may call a special conference. Participants at the conference may include the

parents involved, the teacher and the director. If the conferees cannot agree on a course of action, the matter may be brought before the full Board for a final decision.

### **Enrollment of Children with Special Needs**

It is the policy of the school that children with special needs be included in enrollment when it is determined that the staff and/or facility can provide a beneficial classroom setting for this child. At the time of application to the school, parents shall be required to fully disclose any known special needs of his/her child. It is the prerogative of the school to request that the child be evaluated prior to admission to the school and that any medical, educational or other pertinent records be offered to the school for consideration.

### **Withdrawal Procedures**

When a student voluntarily withdraws from school prior to the end of the school year, the parent must notify the Director at least 2 weeks in advance. Following the 2-week notice, the current month's tuition will be pro-rated and a refund made if applicable. The retainer, registration and equipment fees are not refundable.

When a family is not actively participating in the school as outlined in the Parent Participation Contract and thereby falls out of good standing, the following steps will be taken:

- ◆ A conference with the parents, the Director and other involved parties will be called. The purpose of this meeting shall be to develop a plan, which will remedy the problem.
- ◆ If the family does not follow through with this plan in good faith, written notification will be given which shall include the specifics of the plan, a time limit for compliance and a notice detailing the consequences of non-compliance.
- ◆ If compliance is not achieved by the end of the time limit, the child may be dropped from enrollment and not admitted to the classroom

### **Extended Leave**

Cottonwood's expenses do not change when individual students take an extended leave of absence from the classroom. Therefore, tuition payments must be made in full during extended leaves. Or, a child may voluntarily withdraw pursuant to the terms of withdrawal procedures. If space is available, the child may re-enroll and a new registration, equipment and retainer fee would not be required. The preschool offers no guarantee that openings in the classroom will not be filled during the time a student has voluntarily withdrawn.

## Tuition and Fees/Class Schedules

Fees for the 2015-2016 school year:

- Registration fee (\$45.00) must accompany enrollment applications to be considered for admission. If the child is not admitted into a class due to lack of space by August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, the registration fee will be refunded. If a space is made available and the applicant declines, this fee is non-refundable.
- A retainer fee, which is equal to one month's tuition, is due on or before the Spring General Board meeting (April 2015), or at the time of registering after this date. This retainer fee will be the May 2016 tuition payment. This retainer fee will be refunded only if you forfeit your class spot before the first day of fall classes and ONLY if the class is fully enrolled at that time. Otherwise, the retainer fee is non-refundable.
- Monthly tuition is due the first day of each month beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Payments should be placed in the Tuition box located in the block room at school. Parents who have not submitted tuition payments by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, shall be assessed a late fee of \$10.00. If a child's tuition is in arrears by 30 calendar days, the child may not be admitted to class until tuition is fully paid.

### Monthly Tuition Rates, 2015-2016

*Children admitted to Cottonwood Preschool need to be 3 by January 7, 2016*

Tues/Thur class	9:00-12:00	\$190/month
Mon/Wed/Fri class	9:00-12:00	\$285/month

- The equipment fee (\$60.00) is due and payable by September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Children entering school after February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 shall pay half the equipment fee, but no further reductions will be made. Registration and equipment fees are non-refundable and are required before a child is admitted into a class.

### **School Calendar/School Closings**

The school calendar shall approximate that of the Jefferson Public School District, with the following exceptions: 1) classes shall begin on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2) classes end on or before the last day in May. A copy of the school calendar shall be provided for each family. If schools are canceled in the Jefferson school District due to weather, school shall subsequently be canceled at Cottonwood. In the event that school needs to be canceled for any reason, Cottonwood staff shall notify each family by telephone. The decision to cancel classes shall be made by the classroom teacher in consultation with the Class Rep. There are 5 snow days allowed for in the school calendar. Any additional days must be made up.

### **Reporting of Licensing Complaints**

Cottonwood Preschool is a fully licensed facility subject to “Rules Regulating Childcare Centers”, issued by the Colorado Department of Human Services. We strive to provide a program, which meets or exceeds the regulations issued by the Department. If you have and questions, please contact our Director. If you have licensing complaints, you may file them with:

The Division of Child Care  
Colorado Dept. of Human Services  
1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, CO 80203-1714  
(303) 866-5958

# School Communication

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*Communication is  
the key to a  
successful school  
year*

## **Monthly Newsletter – The Cottonwood Seedling**

Distributed monthly, this publication provides important information regarding classroom activities, committee updates, Board activity, important dates, and articles of interest regarding early childhood issues. Please take a few minutes each month to read our newsletter--our most important vehicle for communicating school activity. If at any time you would like to have an article printed in the newsletter, please contact the Director and it will be forwarded to the Newsletter editor.

## **Facebook**

We update our Facebook page periodically with pictures, articles of note, and events.

## **Parent Folders**

Located in the entry area of our classroom are our parent folders. This is our quickest and most effective method of communication. PLEASE CHECK THESE DAILY FOR CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS.

**“You Must Read This”** box on the bulletin board. Articles of interest will be put here periodically.

## **Board Meetings**

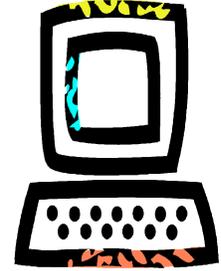
Board Meetings are held once a month. Dates and times of Board Meetings will be listed in The Cottonwood Seedling and posted on the bulletin board. All parents are invited and encouraged to attend Board Meetings.

## **Parent Meetings**

Effective communication is the key to a successful cooperative preschool. Once a month, we will have a parent meeting or gathering of some sort. All families are encouraged to attend as many of these events as possible. A typical school calendar is as follows:

- ◆ August: Parent Orientation Meeting (required) - this is an introduction to Cottonwood policies and procedures for all parents, returning and new. The main topic is the role of parents in the classroom

- ◆ September or October: Family Social – a chance to meet other Cottonwood parents in an informal, social atmosphere. The Social is usually a potluck, held at the school or at the home of a Cottonwood family.
- ◆ October: Individual Class Meetings (required) – Run by the classroom teachers, this is an opportunity to review helping parent guidelines and discuss any class issues, routines or special activities. A review of our curriculum will also be addressed.
- ◆ November, January, February, and March: Parent Education Meetings and Discussions



### **Parent Bulletin Board/Parent Shelf**

Located in our hall entry. Please check this board daily for school information and articles of interest to parents.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

One in November and one in March. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's development and progress in the classroom with their teacher.

### **Helping Parent Days**

This is a good time to ask questions or discuss classroom issues with your child's teacher. Be sure to do this before and after class when you are not around little ears, not during class time. Teacher's time is limited, and the teacher may choose to make an appointment at a later time.

### **Class Representatives**

Each class has a parent volunteer Class Representative. This person is the liaison between the parents in the class and the Board and teaching staff. Feel free to contact your Class Rep at anytime with questions or concerns. Class reps attend all Board Meetings and can easily communicate any issues you may have. They are also available to provide grocery certificates.

### **By Phone/Email**

Please be sure that your phone number and email address (if applicable) is kept current on your class roster. We are trying to encourage the use of email when possible to communicate with parents and staff.

*Being part of a parent participation preschool means interaction on many different levels, with many different individuals.*

*The success of our program depends upon clear communications.*

Teachers are available by phone and/or email as needed to discuss classroom issues or concerns regarding your child. Staff requests that calls, when possible, be made during regular office hours unless your need is urgent. Individual conferences may be scheduled at any time, as needed.

In addition to communicating school information to parents--we would like to hear from you as well. If you have questions, concerns, or a great idea, please contact our program director at any time.

## **Health and Safety Guidelines**

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### **HEALTH GUIDELINES**

In an effort to create a healthy and safe preschool environment, all families must abide by the following rules. Any family failing to meet any of these Health Guidelines may be dismissed from Cottonwood Preschool.

1. Complete registration, emergency forms, health and medical records and turn in to the Admissions Chair before the first day of school.  
Insure your child's immunizations are current.
  - IF CHILD IS FULLY IMMUNIZED – Complete Certificate of Immunization form and turn into Admissions Chair.
  - IF CHILD IS NOT FULLY IMMUNIZED: If you have chosen not to immunize your child, your responsibilities are listed below:
    - a) Statement of Exemption to Immunization Law printed on the reverse of the Certificate of Immunization form must be filled out & given to Admissions Chair. Please be sure to list any immunizations your child has had on the front of the form.
    - b) You must be completely knowledgeable on the symptoms of any diseases your child has not been vaccinated for. If your child exhibits any of the symptoms of these diseases, you must notify the Director immediately.
    - c) Be prepared to keep your child out of school until the Doctor (in conjunction with the Colorado Dept. of Health) determines it is safe for your child to return. Understand in



advance that this time period may be as long as 2 months, depending on the circumstances.

2. Keep my child and myself out of school if we exhibit any of the symptoms of contagious illnesses listed below:

- fever of 101 degrees F (auxiliary) or higher within 24 hours
- thick, colored nasal discharge
- 3 or more loose, watery stools within 24 hours
- thick, colored drainage from the eyes
- vomiting on 2 or more occasions within 24 hours
- within 24 hours of starting any antibiotics
- any evidence of lice
- any unusual rashes, not associated with diapering, heat or allergies

Often the spreading of illness occurs before severe symptoms occur, i.e. fever, vomiting, etc. Observing your child's behavior is the key way to detect the possible onset of an illness. It is up to you to keep your child home if you believe he/she is coming down with something other than a common cold. It is also your responsibility to find a sub to work on your workday if you believe you are coming down with a contagious illness.

3. The Colorado Department of Health requires that you contact the Director immediately if you suspect anyone in your family has any type of contagious illness (ex: pink eye, chicken pox, head lice, pertussis (whooping cough)) The Director must also be contacted if you or your child were exposed to any contagious illness.
4. CHICKEN POX POLICY: If you know your child has been exposed to chickenpox, inform the Director immediately according to the guidelines listed above.
5. Be overly cautious in regard to hand washing both for adults and children at school. Hands should be washed at the following times:
  - Upon arrival at school, we encourage all children to wash their hands before coming into the school.
  - Prior to handling or eating any food.
  - After using the toilet or helping a child use the toilet/change a diaper.
  - After blowing nose.
6. Apply sunscreen as needed before class for everyday outside play, licensing does not allow us to apply sunscreen without written permission from you.

### **Medication Procedures and Storage**

1. As a general rule, medications are not administered at preschool. In an event that your child needs medication while at school, it must be stored in the designated medication box located in the office out of the reach of any children. The staff has been trained in medical administration in accordance with the Nurse Practice Act, so with the doctor's instructions on the original bottle, we are authorized to give your child any medicine needed during preschool hours. If there is a special consideration, our staff will be specially trained to take care of your child's medication needs.



### **Illness, Accidents and Injuries**

Sick children cannot be cared for at school. If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be notified immediately. The child will be isolated from the group and comfortably cared for and supervised until parents arrive.

In the event of an accident or injury, which requires medical attention, staff shall immediately notify parents and/or medical personnel as instructed in writing by the parent. All of our teachers are First Aid/CPR certified.

### **Toilet Training**

At Cottonwood, we do not require that your child is toilet trained to attend our preschool. It is preferable that they are able to use the restroom and wash their hands alone, but together we can take extra measures to make



them comfortable at school and guide them toward self sufficiency. If this is a concern, please discuss it with the teachers or director so we can develop a plan of action together. We may ask for any needed assistance if your child soils themselves during their day.

### **SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The following procedures are required by the State health and human services guidelines

### **Emergency Procedures**

Tornado drills shall be performed once during each school year. If a tornado warning is issued, parents are advised not to pick up their children

until the warning is over. Children will remain in a place of safety at the school until the warning is lifted.

Fire drills shall be performed twice during each school year. Evacuation plans are posted and fire alarm equipment shall be utilized during drills.

In the event of a fire or emergency other than a tornado, children will be evacuated to a safe area and parents shall be promptly notified. Staff will remain with the children until the emergency has passed and class has resumed, or until parents have picked up their children.



### **Head Count of Children**

The staff at the school is responsible and required to take a headcount of the children in the class in accordance to the enrollment record at the beginning of the class. It is suggested that each teacher identifies where every child is every 15 minutes in addition to every time there is a change in play – Outside to Inside, Snack to Classroom, etc. Because of the parent involvement, it is a great help when the helping parent assists in this count as often as needed.

### **Lost Child Policy**

In the case that the count reveals a child is missing, all staff and parents are informed immediately. The children are collected and kept together with one adult as the other two search the suspected areas, inside and out. If there is no sign of the child after a thorough and comfortable search, the teacher is to call 911 and the parents immediately.

### **Child Picked Up After Closing or Not Picked Up At All**

We ask that you arrive on time to pick up your child from preschool. If you are running late, please give your teacher a quick text so we can inform your child and alleviate any concerns. Be assured that your child will not be left at the school until someone has arrived to pick them up. If there is no contact by the parents and the class is over, we will call the numbers on the emergency contact list until we have reached someone that has been authorized to be responsible for the child. In the event that no one can be reached and we have put forth sufficient effort, the local police department will be notified.

### **Reporting of Child Abuse**

Child abuse is generally defined as non-accidental, physical or mental injury caused by the acts of omissions of the child's parents or caretakers, including physical abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment and sexual abuse. As required by law, any staff member who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse, must immediately report such fact to the county department of social services or local law enforcement agency at the following address:

Jefferson County Human Services  
Children, Youth & Families  
900 Jefferson County Parkway  
Golden, CO 80401  
303-271-4015

### **Visitors to the Center**

Please note that any visitors to our center must sign in at the Playground Door. This is a state requirement as well as a Cottonwood Policy. We need to keep track of observers or other persons that cross through our doors. Make sure you monitor this situation on your helping parent day along with our staff.

### **Release of Children**

The children at Cottonwood will only be allowed to leave with their parents and the people that have been authorized on their emergency consent form. It is your responsibility to inform any person that may be unfamiliar they will be required to present Identification for the release of the child - the parents may be called to confirm the release. Please let the teachers know ahead of time if we should expect an unfamiliar face to come for your child.



*“...It is a requirement at Cottonwood that all visitors must sign in at the playground door”*

*“Any unfamiliar person will be asked to show identification to pick up a child!”*

## Ground Rules for Children

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- Plenty of rest, a good breakfast and an unhurried routine will help insure that your child functions at his/her best
- Arrival at school is flexible between 9:00 and 9:30. Arriving within this window will help ease your child into our daily routine - it is much more difficult to join an activity or group of children already 'in progress'.
- We encourage your child to wash their hands before they enter the play area for class, this will help us to keep germs at a minimum.
- PLEASE SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IN PLAY CLOTHES! Wearing clothes that 'cannot get dirty' will inhibit your child's interactions with materials
- Tennis shoes or other sturdy shoes are preferable. The sand and gravel on our playground makes wearing sandals, slip-ons, flip-flops and dress shoes uncomfortable
- We plan to play outside everyday, therefore please dress your child for the weather. This includes coats, hats, boots, and mittens on snowy days.
- Generally, toys from home are discouraged. If your child needs to bring something from home to help make the transition to school he/she *will* be encouraged to keep it in the “stuff from home basket”.

### **Outside Policy**

Outdoor time at Cottonwood is an integral part of the curriculum. The children will have the option of playing



outside. No one will be forced to play outside, and no one will be forced to play inside. Children need to experience all weathers in order to understand weather. Make sure that your child has coats, hats, mittens and boots (if necessary) on before they go out. If they choose to remove mittens or hats or to unzip coats once they are busy playing, that is their choice, however we will watch carefully for signs of cold. Even before a child looks cold, we'll ask them to listen to their bodies to decide if they are warm or cold. By following this policy, you will know what to expect from a day at Cottonwood, and the same rules will apply to all children so that they can feel in control of their play and of their day.

***Having the opportunity to choose is very powerful!"***

## Ground Rules for Parents

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- Accompany your child into the classroom, sign the attendance form, check bulletin boards and folders for important communications.
- Please inform your child's teacher of anything which might affect your child's behavior in school--lack of sleep, upsets at home, company from out of town, etc. This knowledge will help teachers to better understand your child's behavior and adjustment to the classroom.
- Please say good-bye to your child before leaving. 'Sneaking out' to avoid separation issues generally magnifies the problem and can result in loss of trust between parent and child. Teachers will be happy to assist you should you have problems with separation.
- Arrival and dismissal times are generally not good times for teachers to talk at length with parents. Our place is with the children at these times. If you have questions or concerns that will take more than a minute to discuss, please schedule a convenient conference time.
- Members of carpools must be sure to authorize the release of their child to other carpool drivers on the pertinent school forms. Please check the folders and cubbies of all children in your carpool so that important information is carried home daily. Be sure to sign in or out all children in your carpool upon arrival and dismissal.
- Please allow us to 'close' our class time together without interruption. You may wait outside the classroom or join us if needed until dismissal.
- Please check and clear out cubbies and parent folders after each class.

# Helping Parent Guidelines

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## **PRIOR TO HELPING**

- *Please make arrangements for your other children.* Because the day is to be in the classroom with your preschooler, we cannot allow siblings in the class (if they are not enrolled) or allow you to “run out” or leave the school for any reason. Infants in packs are the only exception.
- Contact the teacher prior to your helping day for any special assignments or planned activities.
- Please leave your cell phone in the car or switch the ringer off. While in the classroom, your place is with your child and the others. Any business or personal issues can be taken care of before or after class. We understand there may be an exception to this rule (emergency); please be respectful of classroom needs.
- Adults need to wear “play clothes” too. You will be asked to participate in activities with the children.
- Prepare and bring a snack for the class (See snack ideas on pg 25).
- On helping days, your place is with the children. Please refrain from lengthy chats with other parents or classroom visitors on these days.
- As a Classroom helper, professional behavior is expected. It is inappropriate to discuss the behavior or activity of other children in the classroom with 3rd parties. Direct any questions you have regarding classroom issues to the teacher.
- If in doubt about what to do--please ask! It is the teacher's job to help you feel comfortable in the classroom.



## **SET-UP TIME**

- Arrive 30 minutes prior to class for set-up.
- Put away your snacks and personal items.
- Prepare easel paints and brushes.
- Prepare bathroom--put out soap, check toilet paper and paper towels.
- Assist the teacher as needed. Inquire about special projects.

## **ARRIVAL**

- Greet each child as they arrive, giving a warm welcome to the classroom.
- Assist the child in putting away personal belongings.
- Help direct children to engage in daily activities.
- Check with the parents of children with allergies; make sure they are able to eat the snack that you have to offer.

## **CENTERS**

- Adults distribute themselves around the room as the children do--be the teacher's extra eyes, ears and hands.
- Help as needed--re-fill paints, read a story, assist in the bathroom, help children write names on projects.
- Find helpful and positive ways to interact with children without dominating their play. Comment positively on their work. "Wow! What do you think of that?" is often plenty of comment.
- Take cues from the child. Does he/she want your interactions or simply need someone to listen? Perhaps the child simply wants someone to watch quietly as he/she plays.
- Do not feel you must be busy or talking all the time. Allow for some time to observe and enjoy the activity of the children.



## **PICK-UP TIME**

- Adults work alongside the children, helping to straighten the room, calling attention to those items which need to be put away.
- All children are encouraged to put toys away, "Find a place for this." We all strive to get everything picked up, although the children are not forced. Playtime is really done, however.
- The Helping Parent is primarily responsible for picking up materials.
- Encourage independence. Give help only as help is needed.

## **SNACK TIME**

- The teacher will cue you when it's time to set up snack. Until then, continue to help with the children.
- It is your responsibility to record the snack choice on the calendar posted. We keep a record of snacks for all classes.
- With your child's help, set the snack tables. Check the posted snack routine to the right of the sink for directions. Also, make sure you are aware of any allergies.
- Adults sit, eat, and converse with the children.
- Snack time should be a relaxed time with pleasant conversation that is modeled by the adults.
- Spills are a normal part of the snack routine and should be treated as such. Children can clean up their own spills assisted only as needed by adults.
- Children are responsible for throwing away their own trash and pushing in their chairs when finished.
- Good manners are encouraged by example.

- Remain at the snack table until the last child is finished.

### **OUTSIDE PLAY**

Please note “outside policy” on page 18

- Assist only as needed with coats, boots, zippers, etc.
- Never let the children outside without an adult. Take your cue from the classroom teacher and assist in taking a head count from time to time.
- Adults are to circulate on the playground so that children are carefully observed and accidents prevented.
- Children may climb as high as they are able to on their own. It is not safe to lift children to heights they are unable to attain on their own. This rule of thumb applies to swings, monkey bars and slides as well.
- Please do not swing children around by the arms or hands. Shoulder and elbow dislocations are not uncommon for preschoolers. If you need to lift or swing a child around, do so only by grasping under the armpits.
- At the swing set, give 4 or 5 pushes then allow the children to practice pumping on their own. Do not park yourself at the swing set for long periods of time. When you are stationary, other children and playground areas lack the supervision needed for safety.
- Adults may accompany children from the playground to use the bathroom, to get a Band-Aid, etc. provided the teacher has first been informed.



### **DISMISSAL**

- The teacher will open doors for parents.
- See that children do not leave the classroom without an authorized adult.
- Help children to locate their art work or personal belongings to take home.

### **TEACHER/PARENT CLEAN-UP**

- Plan to stay about 30 minutes after class to help with clean up.
- Vacuum all carpeted areas (the hallway also).
- Sweep and damp mop the tile in the bathroom.
- Empty trash and take to the dumpster.
- Ask the teacher about any other special cleaning needs.
- This is a good time to discuss any issues or concerns with the teachers. We emphasize the importance of privacy and discourage any gossip type discussions.

## **GUIDELINES FOR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM**

Treat all children with dignity and respect, taking into consideration each child's special needs. Corporal or harsh punishment of any kind is not permitted at Cottonwood.

- If a child is being unruly or disruptive, a simple stating of expectation is always the first option. "I can see that you are really angry. I can not let you hit."
- If 2 or more children dispute possession of an object, the goal is to give the children words to solve the problem. The adult role should be that of a "Sportscaster", describing what you see and hear. Encourage each child to verbalize his/her view of the problem. Rather than the adult setting the course of action, let the children work it out.
- If a child is exhibiting aggressive behavior toward another child...firmly state, "I cannot let you [bite, hit, push, etc]."



# Snack Time

Please check with classroom teacher for any allergies or food restrictions.

Snack time provides a rich opportunity for adults to model and encourage healthy eating habits. Therefore, we encourage you to bring nutritious foods to share with our children. We usually serve plain water to drink.

As Helping Parent you provide the snack for the day. The school provides napkins, cups, paper plates, and plastic utensils. Please be aware of any food allergies among the children in your class - a list is posted on the clipboard to the right of the classroom sink. If substitutions need to be made, be aware that a young child *will* be sensitive to receiving a box of raisins when the rest of the class is eating a gooey chocolate cupcake! It is OK to bring a special, sugary type treat to celebrate your child's birthday, however, please be considerate of any food allergies when possible. We stipulate that snacks not contain TREE NUTS or PEANUTS to avoid any allergy issues.

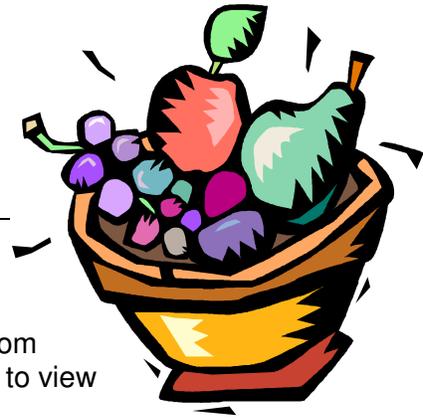
Children love to cook and are capable of helping in many ways. If you are interested in involving the children in snack preparation, feel free to share your ideas with the teacher prior to class so that time can be allowed for such activity.

Please note that the children serve themselves and pour their own drinks. Milk is a great snack drink but must be served in its original container for health reasons. Please bring milk in pint size containers should you decide to provide it.



*Snack time provides a rich opportunity for adults to model and encourage healthy eating habits*

# Snack Ideas



The Jefferson County Health Department governs the acceptable snacks we may serve. Here is an excerpt from their publication. We have this document on file for you to view in its entirety if you are interested.

<b>Approved Food and Beverage Items</b>	<b>NOT Approved Food and Beverage Items</b>
Commercially prepared cookies, crackers, chips, cereals, snacks, pretzels, popcorn, granola bars	Donated or home prepared foods.
Fruit cups, pudding snacks, applesauce, frozen fruit bars or popsicles	Unpasteurized juices or juice products, raw apple cider, etc.
Commercially obtained <u>pre-sliced</u> apples, celery, carrot sticks, etc.	Food items that require cooling or reheating
Prepackaged cheese sticks, individually wrapped cheese slices/sticks, yogurt tubes*	Any potentially hazardous food* See list below
Pasteurized liquid egg product and hard boiled eggs that are obtained from a commercial source.	Any food that requires slicing, dicing or cooking not mentioned above
Nut butter, bread, bagels, cream cheese*, jelly, etc.	Nothing in this section shall prohibit the occasional serving of food in conjunction with a single event or celebration.
Microwave items that require minimal preparation, such as tortilla-and-cheese quesadillas or pre-sliced bagels spread with pizza sauce and cheese.	
Fruit that is peeled before eating and does not require washing, such as bananas, oranges, and tangerines	
Drinks that are provided in pre-packaged individual servings such as boxes or bags. For bulk juice containers, the liquid may be poured into single use/disposable cups.	

\*milk, yogurt, cheese and pasteurized liquid egg product are approved with refrigeration of 41 degrees F or below.

Please note that homemade goodies are acceptable for special occasions like birthdays.

# Special Events

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## Holiday Celebrations

Cottonwood recognizes the value in celebration and the importance of establishing family and cultural traditions in regard to holidays. As educators, our role in regard to classroom celebrations is to;

- demonstrate sensitivity toward the diverse family and cultural backgrounds represented by our parent group and community, and
- Continue to provide developmentally appropriate activity which respects the needs of the children we serve. Our classroom celebrations do not replace regular classroom routines, but rather become a part of them. Young children can easily feel 'out of control' in party atmospheres. Familiar classroom routines with special holiday interest centers are most comfortable for our preschoolers. Your child will, however, always be accepted and encouraged to share, at his/her own initiative, any family of cultural tradition at any time. With these goals in mind, we plan the following classroom celebrations.



## Halloween

Activities may include: pumpkins (to explore, cut carve, decorate, cook, roast seeds, plant seeds, eat etc); costumes in dress-up corner, face painting; orange, black and slime green colors in the art area, music and literature with Halloween themes, hands-on experiences with masks and skeletons, slime in sensory area, etc. With respect to our above stated goals, we will not wear costumes to school or have candy filled treat bags.

## Valentines Day

Activities may include: tracing hearts, licking stamps, stuffing envelopes, mail delivery activities, music and literature with Valentine themes, exchanging valentines, hearts, doilies, lace, glitter, etc. in art.



### **Birthdays**

Class Representatives will usually try to schedule you as the helping parent on or as close to your child's birthday as possible. Please contact your child's teacher prior to birthday celebrations. Our birthday tradition at Cottonwood involves acknowledging the birthday child during circle time and singing "Happy Birthday". You may arrange to provide a special snack on this day as well. Please do not bring goody bags or party favors to school. It is also inappropriate to distribute party invitations at school, unless you plan to invite the entire class, please distribute invitations in parent folders.

### **Field Trips**

As with all school activities, field trips are part of our educational curriculum. Teachers will plan, with advance notice, occasional field trips based on the needs and the interest of the group. Trips will be planned with safety in mind, and which are relevant and meaningful to your children.

- Parents are asked to join us and provide transportation for their children and themselves. Siblings, family members and friends are all welcome on field trips.
- All children must use a car seat for the trip.
- Drivers are required to hold liability insurance on the vehicles and a valid driver's license.

Children will be actively supervised by a responsible adult at all times on field trips. Staff will carry emergency cards for each child in attendance.