

**Art and Science Kids  
Outdoor Preschool Handbook  
2019-2020**



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# Welcome to Art and Science Kids

## Outdoor Preschool

We are an outdoor preschool serving girls and boys in Oregon's wild Illinois Valley. We meet in public forests in all seasons of the year. We hike the trails, jump in the mud, and look at bugs. Art and Science Kids create art, sing, dance, play, and explore the natural world. We follow a daily rhythm, and the children bring imagination to our activities. We build perseverance, fine and gross motor skills, and social skills like empathy and mindfulness. We encourage children to teach and rely upon each other as members of a team or tribe. At our school, everyone is always learning and improving including the adults. Teachers guide us, and students are teachers too.

## Our Daily Rhythm

<b>9am</b>	Free Play Arts and Crafts Clean-up Circle Snack Potty	<b>11ish</b>	Adventure of the Day Clean Up	<b>1pm</b>	Backpacks and Smiles! Dismissal and Pick-Up
		<b>Noon</b>	Lunch Puppet Show		

## Where do we meet?

We meet near local trailheads at Forks Park, Lake Selmac, Jubilee Park, Little Falls Trailhead, Grayback Campground and more. Ask us where we'll be this week!

## School Schedule

For most of the year, we meet four days a week from 9am-1pm Monday-Thursday, and we are usually closed on Fridays. There is a three-week winter break and a one-week spring break. Monday holidays will have make-up days the following Friday. Monthly and annual schedules are available upon request.

## School Closure and Extreme Weather

If a teacher is ill or out of town, school closure is unlikely since substitute teachers are available. We will not close because of ordinary weather events like rain, wind, snow, or cold temperatures. The parks have covered areas, and children should arrive dressed for the weather. If Three Rivers School District calls a delayed start due to snow or icy roads, we will start school one hour late at 10am, and we will finish at 2pm. If Illinois Valley schools call a snow day and cancel school, we will close as well. If we miss more than four days, we will reschedule those days at the end of the year or on Fridays.



## Gear List: What to wear and bring

Students need to come to school prepared for a great day. They must have a backpack with a water bottle, a full change of clothes, and lunch. Ensure the backpack fits well enough for your child to walk around with it. We have chest straps available if your child needs one. In addition, students must come dressed for the weather. Please check the weather forecasts every week and plan accordingly. Students should dress in layers including the following clothing as necessary:

**Puddle pants:** Most of our students wear Grunden's, the brand many fishermen use in Brookings and Crescent City. PuddleGear and other companies make good rubber rain pants as well. Look for rubber pants with a bib and adjustable straps.

**Raincoat:** The raincoat usually comes in a matching set with the pants. Look for rubber coats with a hood.

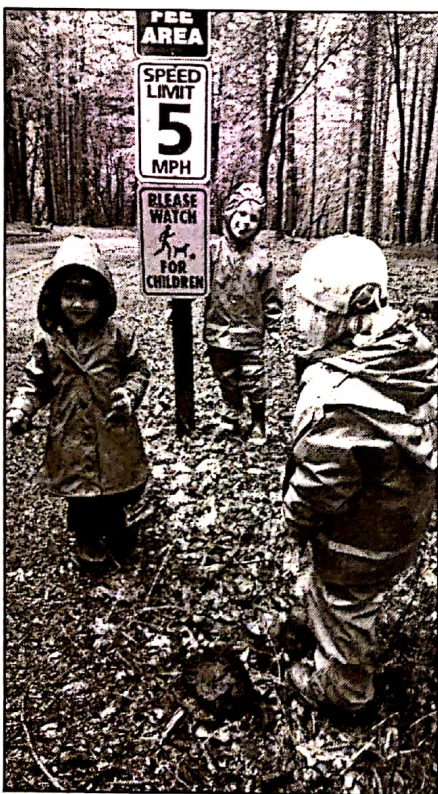
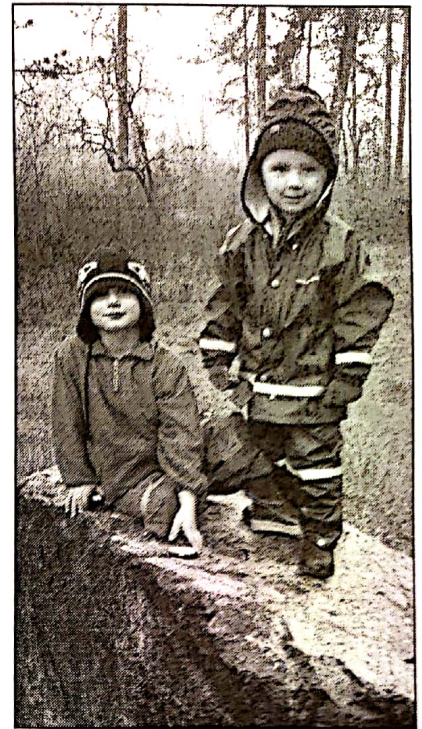
**Mud Boots:** Bogs are the most popular brand, but our students wear a variety of rubber boots. Boots with cracks or holes will not work.

**Wool socks:** Keep an extra pair in the backpack. Cotton socks absorb moisture and draw heat out of your child's body. We highly discourage cotton socks during the colder wetter months.

**Underwear:** Merino wool or synthetic long underwear will help wick moisture away from your child's skin and keep them warm and dry even when they get muddy.

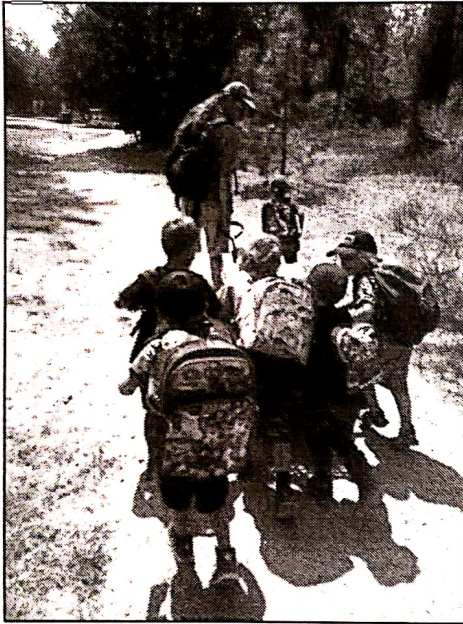
### Free Gear?

We sometimes receive donations of used clothing and money to purchase winter gear. If you are willing to write a few letters, we may be able to help you get the gear your child needs at a reduced cost or free!





## Drop offs and pickups

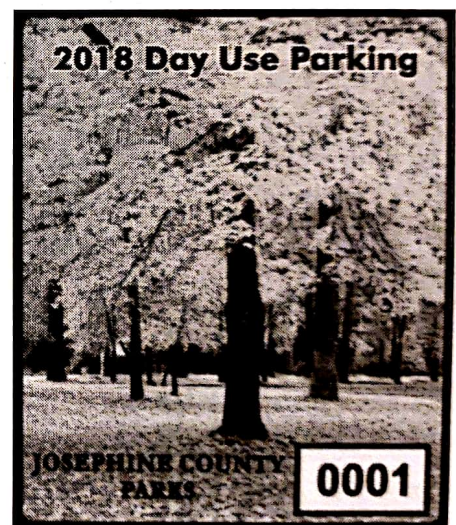


You are welcome to spend a few minutes helping your child get settled. But unless you are volunteering, make your transition time quick to help our students prepare for a great day at school. We will be happy to answer a quick question at this time, but our primary focus during school hours is to supervise and engage with the children. E-mails and phone-calls are a great way to have longer conversations. The end of the day is often a good time to touch base as well.

Drop off and pick up locations will vary weekly and seasonally as we change locations over the course of the school year. Lake Selmac in particular has several locations where we may be on a given day.

## Lake Selmac Parking Permit

Most of our meeting spots include free parking, but Lake Selmac is a county park that requires a parking permit if you are staying for more than a few minutes. Day passes are available for \$5 at the park, but we recommend an annual pass for \$35. These passes are available online at <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/parks> or you can often purchase them from a campground host at the lake. Lake Selmac is entirely supported by user fees, so please support the parks by purchasing a pass.



## Illness

Runny noses and lingering coughs are normal, but please keep sick children at home. Children with severe rashes, diarrhea, fevers, or vomiting in the last 24 hours should not come to school. Let us know if your child has been diagnosed with communicable diseases (such as lice or chicken pox), so we can inform the other families.



## **Tuition**

Except for summer sessions, our expectation is that your family has signed up for the whole school year. Annual tuition is \$4000, which you may pay in 10 equal payments of \$400 from August until May. In some cases, we can create one, two, or three-day schedules for your child at a reduced cost. Please ask if you need a partial schedule. Tuition is due on the 20th day of each month. You must make each payment in full no later than the last business day of the month, or we will not be able to serve your child the following month. We will announce summer tuition and deadlines by the end of April. Tuition is non-refundable.

## **Discounts**

We offer two discounts. Full-time families who pay on or before the deadline may take a \$20 discount each month. Full-time families who meet their stay-day commitments may take an additional \$80 discount each month.

## **Drop-in tuition: \$25**

There are two reasons why families may need to have a \$25 per day drop-in schedule:

1. You are on our waiting list.
2. You are committed to our program, but you have an unpredictable schedule.

These situations are both unusual because we strive for full enrollment every day. However, if you are on our waiting list or have an unpredictable schedule, please contact us, and we might be able to accommodate you. Most of these arrangements require at least 12 hours notice, but sometimes a last-minute opening occurs. We reserve the right to say no on any given day. Our program is based on rhythms and repeated practice. Students who only come occasionally are not going to receive the full benefits we offer such as social development, motor skills, perseverance, and kindergarten readiness.

## **Financial Assistance**

Several retired folks in our community have offered to pitch in to purchase winter clothing and to sponsor a needy student. If you need help purchasing rain gear or if you need scholarship funds to help with tuition, please let us know. You will have to write personal letters to the donors explaining why you need the funds, and you will need to write thank you letters if you receive them. We are happy to help you write, proofread, edit, and send the letters. Just ask!



## Lunch and Snacks

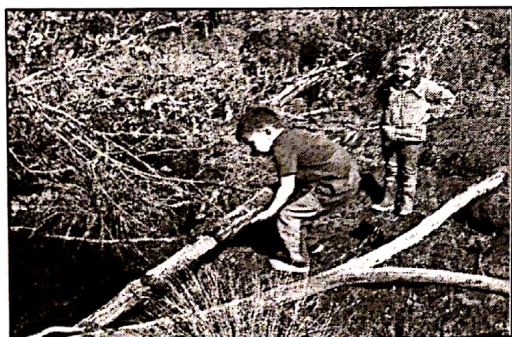
Please supply a lunch in your child's backpack every day. As part of your tuition, we will share a hearty snack with herbal or fruit tea each morning at about 10:15. We switch the snack up a little every week to include fresh fruits and vegetables, muffins, dried fruit, crackers, cheese, and meat. We learn and practice our social skills at snack. We learn to wait our turn, say "thank you", and enjoy a conversation with our friends. Please let us know if your child has any dietary restrictions.



## Potty

Please be sure to take your child to the restroom in the morning before drop-off. Setting up a regular morning rhythm will help all of us get going with our day since it will take some time to go potty. The parks where we meet all have pit toilet outhouses. And we will all go there after circle and snack time around 10:30. We always keep a potty seat and a step stool handy. During our adventures, children may go "nature pee" as needed.

## Outdoor Hazards and Safety



Proper gear will protect your child from weather hazards like sun and cold temperatures. Please apply sunscreen if your child needs protection on sunny days. We teach and emphasize safety rules every day, so children know how to stay safe at school. Children must stay within view of a teacher. Children may climb to their ability and to a height twice their own, but we will not help them up.

Wading, splashing, and exploring our waterways will happen frequently, so we always exercise caution around water.



Ticks can be a problem, so we carry a natural bug repellent for when we notice ticks on certain days. We strongly encourage you to look for ticks when children get home, and we will notify you if we find ticks.

Poison oak is common and can cause rashes and blisters on children's skin year-round. Our primary defense is to teach the children how to identify poison oak in the four seasons. We will also wash hands, arms, and ankles as needed. We recommend that you bathe your child when you return home from school.







## Stay-Day Guidelines

Our families are the backbone of our program, so we ask you all to provide an adult to stay for the day once a week.

Moms, dads, grandparents, and dedicated members of the Illinois Valley community arrive at 9am ready to engage with our



students. We will create a stay-day schedule each month. The following guidelines will help you and the children have a great day at school. Grown-ups are busy people, and we all make mistakes, so we may approach you with a few reminders.



- Listen to the children.
- Observe the children and their environment.
- Limit outside conversations.
- You are welcome to make a brief text/call. Please step away from the group if possible.
- Practice a calm voice.
- Participate in all the activities (circle time, countdown, etc.)
- Inform the teacher of any behavioral issues you feel you can't handle.
- Teach perseverance with backpacks, clean-up time, etc. Assist if needed, but do not do it for them.
- You may be asked to help the teacher with tasks such as serving snack.
- You must maintain confidentiality. Do not discuss any situations specific to any child with other parents or teachers unless required to do so for the safety or well-being of the child.



Unfortunately, if you are unable to follow these basic guidelines, we may ask you to leave, and you may lose your stay-day tuition discount. Stay-day hours count toward the following month's discount. If you need to change your day, please contact us right away.







## **Art and Science Kids Family**

The best way to build a strong community among our families is to stay for the day once a week. You get to learn the Art and Science Kids rhythm, and you get to know our students. We will also invite all families to two picnic celebrations in the fall and spring, and we will provide a class list to each family. In addition, we will publish a newsletter once a month, and we will post photos and information on our website and social media. We always ask for

permission to publish your child's photo during initial registration. Please let us know right away if you do not want your child's photo posted on the internet or in our newsletters and publications. We never publish children's names with photos, but sometimes family members will mention children's names in the comment sections on social media.

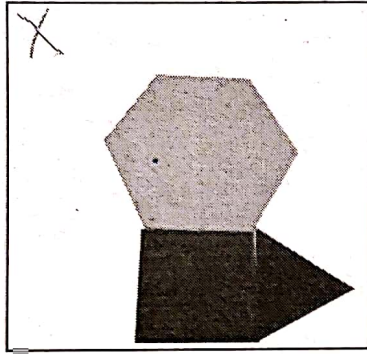
## **Birthdays**

Children are always proud to reach this annual mile stone. You are welcome to send a special snack to school on your child's birthday that we can share with everyone at about 12:45 before dismissal. You are welcome to meet us at the park with your family to sing, cheer, and tell stories for the new birthday kid.





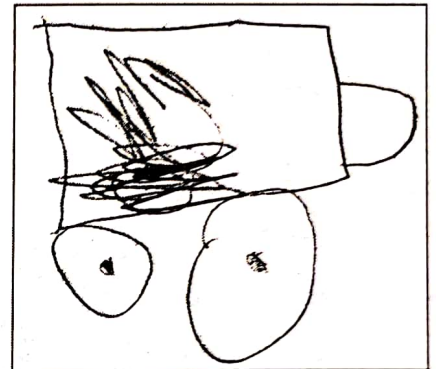
## Art!



*Glued shapes by Mikey Age 4*

are a common sight at school. We also provide different materials depending on the day such as paint, crayons, glue, and colored string. Art projects are typically child-driven, but sometimes the adults will provide a crafty activity for the children to try. Most art-pieces are temporary, but occasionally students may bring paintings, drawings, and crafts home.

Researchers like psychology professor Alison Gopnik from UC Berkeley have shown that young children are often more creative than their older peers and their adult teachers. Additionally, preschoolers' art is typically more about play and the experience of creating than it is about completing a project. This is why our art is so focused on providing materials and a creative environment. Our students usually express their artistic creativity with natural materials. Stick buildings, sand castles, and stacked rocks



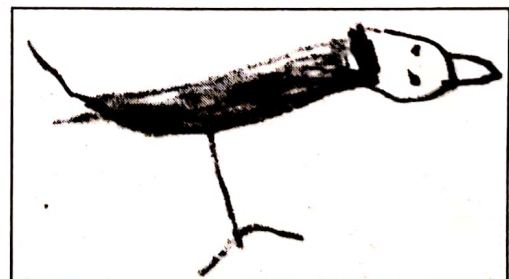
*Truck by Ezi age 5*

## Science!



rain, and the mud. We listen to the birds and the wind. We watch the animals, the tall trees, and the bushes. We use magnifying glasses, turkey basters, binoculars, and shovels to inspect objects large and small near and far. We draw pictures of what we see. Early experiences with observation make us ready for our later science educations.

For young children the most important scientific principle is observation. There are lots of questions to explore. Art and Science Kids dive into the natural world with our hands by manipulating objects, feeling textures, and pulling things apart. We smell the seasons, the flowers, the



*Scrub Jay by Kai Age 5*



## Kindergarten Readiness

In a survey of Illinois Valley kindergarten teachers, we found that listening is the most important skill an incoming student can have. In addition, these students need social skills in order to sit with a large group of children and interact positively. At Art and Science Kids, social development is a top priority. Every day, our students learn to stay with the group, listen attentively, self-regulate their emotions, and collaborate. We also teach students how to use kind words when speaking to each other.

The local kindergartens also have a few benchmarks in the areas of literacy and mathematics. We teach the following skills over the course of the year:

- Write your name
- Count objects to 10
- Recite the alphabet
- Recognize at least 13 letters
- Know the days of the week
- Recognize basic shapes and colors



*Outdoor preschool prepares students for collaborative activities. Here first grade students are programming robots in a local public school classroom.*

We are confident that our students will have the tools ready to become successful kindergartners. We can also help you find the resources you need if you choose to home-school your child after you leave us.



*By teaching skills like singing songs, clapping rhythms, and staying with the group, our students will be prepared for indoor activities like this fiddling class with Kelly Thibodeaux at the local public school.*



## Recommended Reading

### Books:

*Forest Kindergartens: The Cedar Song Way* by Erin K. Kenny

*Heaven on Earth* by Sharifa Oppenheimer

*Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv

*Nature Preschools and Forest Kindergartens* by David Sobel

*Work and Play in Early Childhood* by Freja Jaffke

*A Year of Forest School* by Jane Worroll and Peter Houghton

\*\*\*We have these books available to borrow, just ask. We will bring them to parent meetings too.

### Great Article:

"Preschool Without Walls" by Lillian Monguac <http://nyti.ms/1R5e5qP>

### Web Resources:

Children and Nature Network <http://childrenandnature.ning.com>

The Nurture Store <http://nurturestore.co.uk>

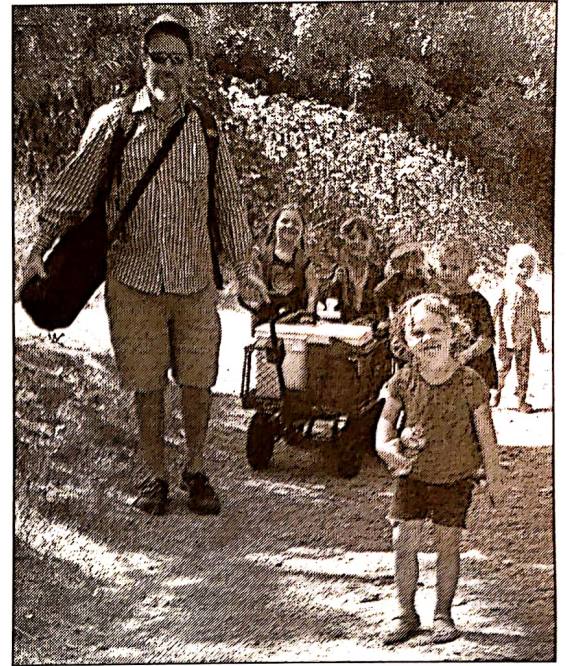
TinkerGarten <https://tinkergarten.com/>





## Meet Joseph Flaherty

Local children call me "Mr. Flaherty", "Teacher Jofus", or just plain "Joe". I moved to O'Brien in 2005 after completing my master's degree in Early Childhood Development from Southern Oregon University in Ashland. I am a certified teacher licensed by the state of Oregon. I have over a decade of experience working with young children in the Illinois Valley. I taught first grade at Evergreen Elementary School for eleven years, and I also worked at the local Head Start. I taught an after school math and science class to fourth and fifth graders, and I taught English Language Development to Spanish speaking students at the middle school and high school level. In my final years in the public schools, I sat on committees and led professional workshops on the subjects of student behavior, school improvement, and science instruction. I tutor children of all ages in all subjects especially algebra, geometry, and primary grade literacy. I enjoy long hikes in the mountains, playing music with my friends, and petting my cat Roo. My favorite wilderness area is the Kalmiopsis.



## Meet Gabby Taylor

Hello, My name is Gabby Taylor. I have always had a love for working and creating with young children. I grew up in Maryland where I graduated Brunswick High School. In high school I took 2 years of child development, I currently have a 2 year old son named Jasper. I love every aspect of teaching him. He has taught me that children teach us as much as we teach them. My dream is to open up a licensed childcare center here in the Illinois Valley. I believe that Art and Science Kids Outdoor preschool is a wonderful space socially, emotionally, and academically. I love to go hiking, adventuring, kayaking, traveling, spending time with my family, music, running my hummus business, and aerial silks.

