

Art and Science Kids
Outdoor Preschool Handbook
2022-2023

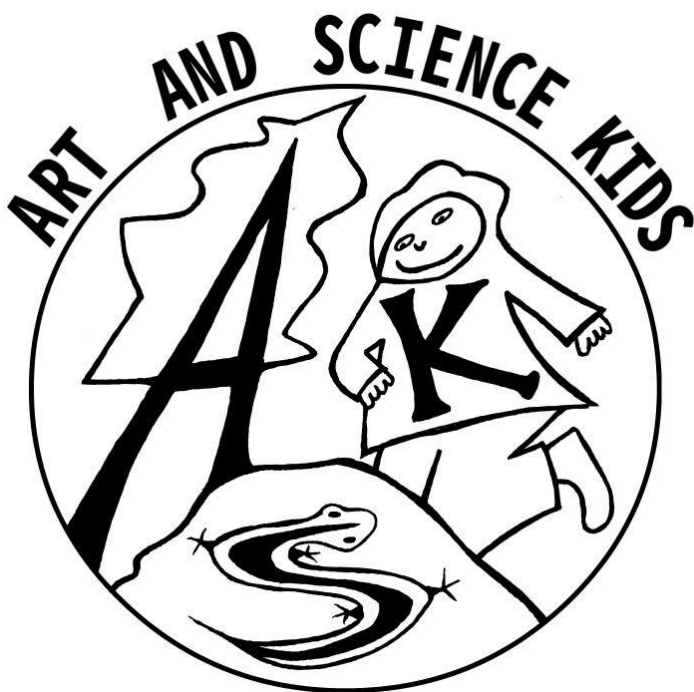


Table of Contents

Welcome to Art and Science Kids

Where and When do we meet?

Gear list: What to Wear and Bring

Free gear?

Drop offs and pick ups

Illness

Tuition and Enrollment

Lunch and Snacks

Outdoor Hazards and Safety

Stay-Day Guidelines

Art and Science Kids Family

Art!

Science!

Kindergarten Readiness

Meet Our Staff



Welcome to Art and Science Kids

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 school family. At our school, everyone is always learning and improving, including the adults. Teachers guide us and students are teachers, too.

Our Daily Rhythm

9am

Free Play
Arts and Crafts
Clean Up
Potty
Circle
Snack

10:30

Adventure of the Day
Sit Spots
Journals
Clean Up

Noon

Lunch
Puppet Show

1pm

Backpacks and Smiles
Dismissal and Pick-Up



Where and When do we Meet?

We meet near local trailheads at Forks Park, Lake Selmac, Jubilee Park, Grayback Campground and our own Dogwood Forest. Ask us where we'll be this week!

Dogwood Forest

Dogwood Forest is our home base located at 590 North Old Stage Road in Cave Junction. Here we have access to our own yurt, a campfire, and running water when we need a space of our own. This land was purchased with the support of our families who paid tuition, donated money, promoted our fundraisers, and volunteered to clean up, build fences and a shelter, and install our water line. We have plans to build a covered entrance with a handwashing sink this fall.

School Schedule

For most of the year we meet four days a week from 9am - 1pm Monday-Thursday, and we are usually closed Fridays. There is a three-week winter break and a one-week spring break. 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

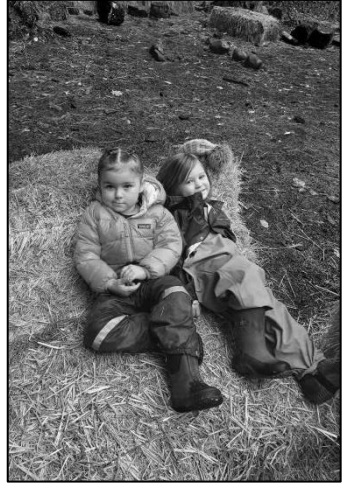


temperatures. We have covered areas, and children should arrive dressed for the weather. If Three Rivers School District calls a delayed start due to snow or icy roads, we will start school one hour late at 10am. School will still end at 1pm. If Illinois Valley schools call a snow day and cancel school, 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. We meet at indoor locations on smoky days if the Air Quality Index is higher than 125 parts per million at 8am.

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 Grundens, the brand many fishermen use in Brookings and Crescent City. Puddle Gear, Polarn O. Pyret, H&M, 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 and Muck are the best, 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 cold 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.

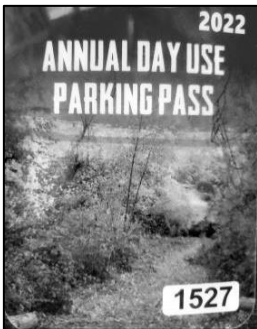


Free gear?

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 off and pickups

You are welcome to help your child get settled. But unless you are volunteering, make your transition quick to prepare our students for a great day at school. We will be happy to answer a quick question, but our focus during school hours is to supervise and engage with children. Emails and phone calls are great for longer conversations. The end of the day is often a good time to touch base. Drop off and pickup locations will vary weekly and seasonally as we change locations over the course of the year.



Lake Selmac Parking Permit

Most locations have free parking, but Lake Selmac is a county park that requires a permit if you stay for more than a few minutes. Day passes are available for \$5, but we recommend an annual pass for \$35. Passes are available from a campground host or online at <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/parks>. Lake Selmac is entirely supported by user fees, so please support the parks by purchasing a pass.

Transportation?

Let us know if your child needs transportation to or from school. We have insurance to provide rides to children. We charge a fee of \$5 per child per way. We can also help you contact other families to set up carpools. These arrangements are especially helpful on field trip days.

Emergency Plan

We call **911** for fire/medical/police emergencies and **800-222-1222** for poison control. We keep a red and black binder and first aid kit in our backpack every day. In an emergency we will grab our backpack and lead the children to safety. At Dogwood Forest we will exit through the double gate at the front, then turn south, and meet at the southeast side of the middle school track. We may access the track through the back gate if needed. If we are at a park, we will meet at the main parking lot. The binder contains attendance and medical release papers. We will count children and contact families once everyone is safe at the meeting place. We practice this plan once a month.

Illness

Sick children must stay home. Runny noses and lingering coughs are common in cold weather and often linger after an illness is no longer contagious. But if a child exhibits more unusual symptoms, we will contact caregivers to arrange pick-up right away. We will move the sick child to an isolated area while they wait for pick up. We may take the child's temperature using a non-contact body thermometer. If any of our staff show symptoms, we will stay home as well. Inform us if your child has been diagnosed with any communicable diseases (such as lice or chicken pox) so that we may inform other families. The health status of individual children or families is confidential.

You may not join us if you are showing any of these symptoms:

- Diagnosis of a child care-restrictable disease
- Fever of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Sore throat or severe cough
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes
- Severe skin or eye lesions or rashes
- Difficult breathing or abnormal wheezing
- Complaints of severe pain

COVID-19

If a child displays two of these symptoms: shortness of breath, unusual cough, fever, or new loss of smell or taste, the child must test negative or quarantine for 5 days from the onset of symptoms. We will only accept at-home tests if they are administered in the presence of our staff or a professionally trained practitioner. Children, volunteers, and staff who have confirmed exposure but no symptoms are not required to quarantine or be tested. The Oregon Health Authority has changed these rules many times in the last two years, so our Covid policy may change. The health status of individual children is confidential.

Immunizations

We support listening your pediatrician. All students must provide proof of immunization or sign an exemption. Please contact us if you need help providing documentation.

Tuition and Enrollment

Except for July and August, our expectation is that your family has signed up for the whole school year. We require all incoming families to pay a \$150 enrollment fee to secure your place. Annual tuition is \$4500, which you may pay in 10 equal payments of \$450 from August until May. Two-day or other partial schedules are no longer available. Tuition is due on the 20th day of each month. You must make 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 and enrollment fees are non-refundable.

Stay-Day Discount

Full-time families who meet stay-day commitments and pay on time may take a discount of \$100 per month. Please see our stay-day guidelines in this handbook.

Drop-in tuition: \$30

Families may need a \$30 per day drop-in schedule for two reasons:

1. You paid the enrollment fee, and you are on our waiting list.
2. You are committed to our program, but you have an unpredictable schedule.

These situations are unusual because we strive for full enrollment. If you are on our waiting list or have an unpredictable schedule, please contact us and we might accommodate you. Most of these arrangements require at least 12-hour 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 on occasion will not receive the full benefits we offer such as social development and kindergarten readiness.

Financial assistance

Some generous folks in our community have offered to purchase winter clothing and sponsor students in need. If you need help, please let us know. You will have to write personal letters to prospective 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. We strongly advise against placing foods with a high sugar content in your child's lunch. As part of your tuition, we will share a hearty snack with herbal or fruit tea each morning at about 10:15am. We switch the snack up a little each week to include fresh fruits and vegetables, muffins, dried fruit, nuts, 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.



Birthdays

Children are always proud to reach this annual milestone. 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.

Potty

We will all go potty before circle and snack time around 10:00. Please encourage your child to use 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. We always keep a potty seat and a step stool handy. During our adventures, children may go "nature pee" as needed.

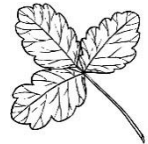
Outdoor Hazards and Safety

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 and mosquitoes can be a problem, so we carry a natural bug repellent for when we notice them 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 children to identify poison oak in the four seasons. We also wash hands, arms and ankles as needed. We recommend that you bathe your child when you return home.



We teach children the identifying features of native mushrooms. When we come across mushrooms on our adventures, we take identification very seriously because there are a variety of dangerous mushrooms that grow in

Southern Oregon. All mushrooms are handled only by adults until we can identify them. We do not let children handle mushrooms until we are positive they are safe. All dangerous or questionable mushrooms are removed from our play area. Children do not eat raw mushrooms at school. Occasionally, we may prepare cooked mushrooms for children to eat at snack time.



Stay-Day Guidelines

Our families are the backbone of our program, so we ask you 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
- Limit outside conversations.
- Step away from the group to make a brief call or text.
- Practice a calm voice.
- Participate in all the activities (circle time, countdown, etc.)
- Inform teachers of behavioral issues you feel you can't handle.
- Be present for all the children-not just your own. If your child is working on a problem with one of our trained adults, please trust us and take the opportunity to work in a different location with other children.
- Teach perseverance with backpacks, clean-up time, etc. Assist or encourage if needed, but do not do it for them.
- You may be asked to help the teacher with tasks such as serving a 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.
- Attend Fall and Spring Stay-Day Trainings.
- You must have a valid background check on file.



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 towards 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 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 also invite all families to two picnic celebrations and two stay-day trainings in the fall and spring, and we provide a class list to each family. We publish a newsletter once a month and we post photos and information on our website and social media. We always ask permission to publish your child's photo during registration. Please let us know if you do not want your child's photo posted on the internet or in our newsletters and publications. We never publish names with photos, but sometimes family members mention children's names in the comment sections on social media.

Home Visits

Our program strives to maintain positive and trusting relationships with all of our families. To improve the integrity of these relationships, our staff often carry out home visits to check in with families, address concerns or pressing topics, and create plans and goals specific to each child. These plans and goals are established in order to help each child in developing and furthering their social/emotional skills, motor skills, and kindergarten readiness. Our main purpose of home visits is to collaborate with parents to ensure that we are taking the most beneficial courses of action for each unique child. We work with families as a team to meet their expectations for their child and help them succeed. We schedule at least one home visit for each student during the course of the school year.

Ages and Stages

Our staff members study childhood development, and we know that all children are unique. We use a questionnaire to check on the progress of each of our students. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is the most widely accepted tool used by medical professionals, counselors, and teachers. The questionnaire includes tasks for children to perform such as balancing, holding objects, and drawing. Please schedule a time in late August for your child's ASQ. We will schedule mid-year sessions in January. All ASQ data collected is confidential. With your permission, we can share ASQ data with your child's pediatrician, kindergarten teacher, or other child care professional.

Take Home Turtles

We have two extra members of our class! Mommy and Baby Turtle like to go home with children on Thursdays and to come back to school on Mondays. They sit and watch all week before choosing who they would like to go and visit. They are cuddly and friendly, and they love to join in with whatever children normally do on the weekend. They love going on adventures, visiting new places, and meeting new people. They get very tired after a busy day playing with his friends. At bedtime they like to have a story and a big hug before going to sleep.

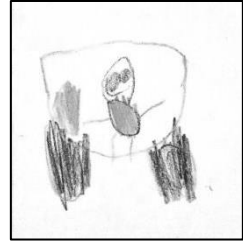
The turtles have a special diary to record the fun time. Children and grown-ups can help fill it up by writing a note about what they have done together, and by adding photos or drawings.

- Please take care of Take Home Turtles.
- Do your best to keep them clean.
- Return all of their belongings.
- Bring them back so more kids can enjoy them next week!



Art!

Kids thrive when they make art. 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. Because art engages any or all of the senses, connections in the brain of a small child fire away as they experience situations and encourage their creativity. Art benefits young children in a variety of ways:



Early Educators tell us that art encourages fine motor skills, neural development and problem solving.

Therapists tell us that art is valuable because it allows children to process their feelings and their world.

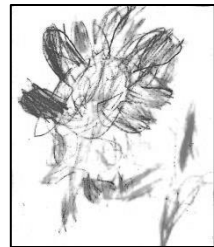
Artists tell us that art is important for its own sake—as a source of

beauty and expression.

Kids tell us that art is fun—an activity they enjoy!

Parents tell us that art is vital to their families because it keeps everyone happy and helps with sometimes difficult transitions.

Preschool 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 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.



Art is Smart! The world needs more and better thinkers!

Science!

For young children the most important scientific principle is observation. There are lots of questions to explore.

“What do you notice?”

“What do you wonder?”

“What does it remind you of?”

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 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 education.



The Illinois Valley is world renowned for its biological diversity. We have laminated cards and guide books available every day to teach children to identify birds, trees, flowers, lizards, mushrooms and all the critters that inhabit our local forests. Learning the names of our local wild friends teaches children to respect nature and investigate further.



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
- Know the seasons
- Recognize shapes and colors
- Correctly hold a pencil
- Wait in line



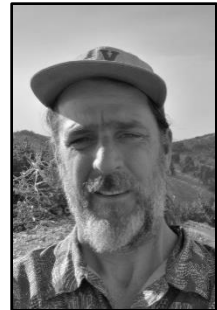
We are confident that our students will have the tools ready to become successful kindergarteners. We can also help you find the resources you need if you choose to home-school your child after you leave us.



Our Staff

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 twenty years of experience working with young children in the Southern Oregon. 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 at 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 subjects especially algebra, geometry, and primary grade literacy. I enjoy long hikes in the mountains and playing music with my friends. My favorite wilderness area is the Kalmiopsis.



Kim Hopewell

I have mostly lived in Oregon since high school and am an Oregon State University graduate with a degree in chemical engineering. My career has been exciting and varied. It has included research and development in a Hewlett-Packard ink lab, using a focused ion beam to edit Pentium processors at Intel, and international travel to teach business analysts functional math. I also worked recruiting volunteer advocates for CASA. Now as a teacher, I am eager to work with students of the Illinois Valley. In my free time, I enjoy being outdoors gardening, hiking, and swimming; cooking; and a never-ending quest to learn as much as possible.



Tani Becker

I studied Elementary Education at Southern Oregon University and have worked with local children for over twenty years. My passion is to guide students so they succeed and flourish. I strive to provide authentic opportunities for child-driven learning in a holistic environment that meets students' needs. I enjoy walks in the redwoods with my dog Sadie.



Ariana Jurisic

I always loved two things in life - working with children and art, and my dreams came true. Shortly after graduating from Economics, Commercial and Administrative Trade School in Croatia, I moved to Italy where I first discovered my love and passion for working with young children. I volunteered at the *Asilo Infantile* in

Vicenza for a year. In 2001 I worked in North Carolina as an early childhood at Alamance Community College. In December of same year is when I had my first child and my schooling was put to a pause. Several years (and four children!) later I began teaching art in San Diego at Ziggy's Tutoring and Inspire Charter School. One of my main ambitions is maintaining positive relationships with students, parents, clients and staff. Now I teach and host art classes and workshops for our local youth and I work with many Illinois Valley families. We make memories that are meant to be remembered!



Leela Whittlinger

After graduating from high school in California, I've spent much of my time expanding my knowledge in history and science and building my experience working with children. I love being outside with kids. I also enjoy hiking, rafting, reading, and painting.



Bruna Pimentel

I moved to Cave Junction in 2015 all the way from Salvador, Brazil where I studied Economics. Since I became a mother in 2017, I have been advocating for my children and families. I first joined Art and Science Kids as a parent in the outdoor preschool program because I truly believe in our core values and our commitment to the children residing in the Illinois Valley. I use my bookkeeping skills to ensure our school can stay inclusive and offer high quality learning opportunities to all children in our community. My experience working here has been so fulfilling that I am currently a teacher-to-be pursuing my bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. My favorite hobbies are enjoying the company of my family and watching my children grow!

