

LAKE FOREST PARKS & RECREATION

KINDERHAVEN

PRESCHOOL



ACADEMY

Kinderhaven Parent Handbook, Guide, & Policies

Please review before the beginning of the school year.
Return the Parent Handbook Statement Form to Jen Stluka.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS:

- Parent Handbook
- Curriculum Guide
- Discipline Policy



DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Mike Wick

SUPERINTENDENT OF RECREATION

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*To reach the Kinderhaven Director call 847-810-3947 or email her at stlukaj@cityoflakeforest.com. To report a child's absence or leave a message for your child's teacher call Kinderhaven at 847-810-3947. Each teacher has an email address as well. These addresses will be available at the beginning of each school year, and they are checked regularly by the teachers.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HISTORY: Kinderhaven Preschool Academy was established in the early 1970s by the Lake Forest Recreation Department Board which recognized the need to provide preschool programming for children residing in the area.

The first program director brought a Montessori influence to the school which continued until the late 1980s. Kinderhaven Preschool Academy has since evolved into the current developmentally appropriate, Reggio-inspired program which emphasizes hands-on, experiential learning and the growth of the whole child.

Most recently Kinderhaven Preschool Academy has been influenced by the excellent preschools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. As we are growing, our classrooms portray a more comfortable (less institutional) atmosphere that welcomes children and their families into the classrooms. Teachers are continually involved with the children in many different ways: through guidance, asking thought provoking questions, direct teaching, researching with the children, observing the children, and documenting projects that the children are creating. We also believe in an “art-based” philosophy, having the children learn about art materials and mediums, artists, and art movements. This culminates in an “art show” showcasing the children’s work and their processes throughout the year. Lastly, we are a “compassion-based” preschool. From the youngest of children, we want our children to understand that they have responsibilities to one another, their community, and the greater world. Throughout the year, the children will have compassion lessons and projects that will allow them to develop their empathy and kindness toward each other and all living beings.

ADMINISTRATION: Kinderhaven Preschool Academy is a nonprofit, nonsectarian school. It is a division of the Lake Forest Parks and Recreation Department and is governed by the members of the Parks and Recreation Board.

STAFF: The KINDERHAVEN DIRECTOR is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, maintaining licensing and accreditation standards and supervision and hiring of staff. The director also serves as an educational advisor, trainer, and support for the teaching staff.

The FACULTY AND DIRECTOR have degrees in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, and/or related fields. Classroom assistants have some early childhood education and/or experience working with young children. Volunteers and student teachers may augment the teaching staff.

The staff to child ratio is 3 to approximately 20 children in the oldest group (4 for approximately 16 for the youngest). The teaching staff and director alike support Early Childhood Education and its relationship to the greater community. All faculty participates in on-going training and education, including research and trends in child development and teaching methods, as well as CPR and safety procedures. Because Kinderhaven is a Reggio- inspired school, the teachers spend many hours of continuing education learning how to implement the Reggio concepts in all aspects of their classes. Additionally, they review the mandatory reporter status every year during their training.

The FACULTY also works throughout the year on a “research project” that requires them to become careful observers in the classroom and researchers outside of the classroom. They turn in an outline of their project in early October, and then develop their project throughout the school year.

LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION: Kinderhaven Preschool Academy is licensed by the State of Illinois and must be re-licensed every two (2) years. Health and safety standards are maintained, and the school is regularly inspected by the local Fire and Health Departments. DCFS Standards are available for review and are located in the entry way of the school.

Additionally, Kinderhaven follows guidelines and regulations for NAREA as well. The teachers and aides are evaluated twice a year, receiving working goals that must be accomplished. Continuing education is a must for all Kinderhaven Preschool staff members.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS: We believe that children are inherently inquisitive about themselves and the world around them; it is intrinsic to their nature to engage in discovery, creativity, and learning. We believe that children do this best through active involvement in their learning experience. Our goal is to provide a warm, nurturing and stimulating environment in which these natural tendencies can flourish. Children are encouraged to ask questions and try new activities. We believe that children learn best when parents and teachers work together and support each other, therefore, we encourage the active involvement of parents in the classroom and at school functions.

CORE VALUES: The following CORE VALUES were developed through a collaborative effort of the Kinderhaven Preschool Academy staff. These CORE VALUES best reflect the goals and objectives of the Preschool.

CORE VALUE: Children have experiences that encourage healthy social- emotional development and a positive self-concept.

If this happens in our classrooms it will look like this:

- Children are encouraged to express themselves in positive ways.
- Children are treated with respect and openly welcomed each day.
- Children’s thoughts and ideas are listened to and discussed.
- Children’s efforts and accomplishments are recognized and reinforced.
- Children’s positive behavior is acknowledged and supported.
- Children’s dispositions to cooperative work and play are recognized and reinforced.

If this happens, then logically these will be short-term outcomes for our children:

- Children feel accepted and comfortable in the classroom.
- Children see school as a positive place to be and appropriately separate from their parents or caregivers.
- Children feel that they are a part of a community where they are accepted and valued.

- Children develop a respect for working hard and being persistent.
- Children develop a positive self-image and think of themselves as successful learners and successful in relating to friends and adults.
- Children develop age-appropriate self-help skills (i.e., toileting, dressing, eating/table manners) leading toward independence.

CORE VALUE: Children will develop a positive character, understanding the importance of compassion and respect for others and their environment throughout all aspects of their daily activities.

If this happens in our classrooms it will look like this:

- Children learn about social problem solving and conflict resolution through direct teaching, modeling, and coaching.
- Group meetings, discussions and activities occur to build a sense of community.
- Children are taught anger management, impulse control, and empathy.
- Children are involved in project work and other activities that require cooperation and collaboration with peers and teachers.
- Compassion activities and group projects will be a natural part of the classroom environment.
- Children participate in activities that promote care of the environment.
- Children have respect for diversity in people and their ideas.

If this happens, then logically these will be short-term outcomes for our children:

- Children will be able to solve problems during social interactions with peers.
- Children will become comfortable interacting with other children during work and play.
- Children will treat each other and adults with care, respect and compassion.
- Children will learn that their actions impact others, and through their positive actions, they can make a difference in the world.
- Children will treat their environment with care and respect.
- Children will respect individual differences.

CORE VALUE: Learning experiences are holistic (involving the whole child) and nurturing, challenging and encouraging children to grow in every aspect of their lives.

If this happens in our classrooms it will look like this:

- Children investigate topics in depth and learn how to use resources such as adults, written materials, and experimentation to learn.
- Play environments will be rich, and time for play will be provided.
- Children represent their ideas and thoughts in many ways: painting, drawing, sculpting, dancing, music, drama, conversation, play, etc.
- Dispositions to learn, work hard, investigate, hypothesize, and analyze are encouraged and nurtured.

If this happens, then logically these will be short-term outcomes for our children:

- Children will participate in interesting and appropriately challenging activities and experiences.
- Children will talk about and share what they are doing and learning.
- Children will exhibit constructive and cooperative play.
- Children will participate in a variety of art experiences.
- Children will think at higher levels, including hypothesizing, estimating, and analyzing.
- Children will become intellectually curious.

CORE VALUE: Children are provided with opportunities to develop fundamental skills that serve as a foundation for future school success and will enhance their desire to learn.

If this happens in our classrooms it will look like this:

- Children participate in developmentally appropriate yet challenging...
 - *Opportunities to use language in meaningful ways
 - *Shared reading activities
 - *Guided writing experiences
 - *Activities that encourage children to “play with language” using rhyme and rhythm to engage them in phonological experiences
- Children have access to many types of literature in the classrooms.
- Children participate in scientific and mathematical thinking, such as hypothesizing, analyzing, and predicting.
- Children’s acquisition of knowledge, skills, and learning dispositions is monitored.
- Children are involved in the study of meaningful topics that relate to typical curriculum goals.

If this happens, then logically these will be short-term outcomes for our children:

- Children will see the value of reading and writing.
- Children will develop fundamental pre-reading/reading and pre-writing/writing skills.
- Children will develop fluency in the use of the English language.
- Children will show an interest in mathematical and scientific problems and activities.
- Children will learn to formulate questions in academic areas.
- Children will be able to search for and find answers to their questions.
- Children will have positive dispositions (attitudes) towards reading, writing, mathematics, and science.

CORE VALUE: Parents are viewed as vital to their child’s development and partners in their child’s education.

If this happens in our classrooms it will look like this:

- Parents are in the classrooms volunteering and sharing their knowledge and skills with the children.

- Parents serve on committees.
- Parents attend open houses, family events, fund raisers and parent classes.
- Parents participate in and share their viewpoint of their child during conferences.

If this happens, then logically these will be short-term outcomes for our children:

- Parents will understand how to support children's learning.
- Parents will feel that they are making a contribution to their child's education.
- Parents and children will share quality experiences together as parents model learning.
- Parents, children, and the school will develop a good working relationship.
- Children's enthusiasm for learning will grow with parent's involvement in their child's educational process.

CORE VALUE: Documentation is an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

If this happens in our classrooms it will look like this:

- Teachers document children's learning on a regular basis. This will be visible through:
 - *Transcripts of the children's words
 - *Descriptions of the learning processes
 - *Collections of the children's work
 - *Photographs of the children working
 - *The teacher taking notes on her or his observations of the children
- Teachers review the children's work and projects by reviewing documentation with the children and one another.
- Teachers work from the documentation to develop projects with the children.
- Documentation is shared with the parents and children in the following ways:
 - *Bulletin boards and documentation panels
 - *Newsletters
 - *Dry erase boards
 - *Children's portfolios
 - *Reports

If this happens, then logically these will be short-term outcomes for our children and parents:

- Children will understand that what they are doing in school is important.
- Children will understand that their work is important to teachers and their parents.
- Children will reflect on their own learning.
- Parents will become more familiar with their children's process of learning.

PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Communication between parents and staff is vital to the success your child has in school. Realizing the importance of on-going communication, we encourage you to keep us up to date on any situation that may impact your child's participation in school. We will also do our best to keep you informed about your child's activity at Kinderhaven Preschool Academy.

Throughout the school year, you will receive newsletters from the teachers which will keep you informed of the activities and projects in your child's class. Also, in the newsletter you will find information regarding upcoming events and other pertinent class information. These will be delivered through your email.

You will also receive a newsletter from the director that will keep you informed about school-wide happenings and topics related to child development, Reggio-information, and other educational topics. This newsletter will also be delivered through email.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

These are scheduled during the first half of the school year and the last half of the school year. The exact dates are in the school calendar. The conferences are no longer than 10-15 minutes in duration and consist of going through a written evaluation of your child, looking at the child's portfolio and any other classroom work, and addressing strengths and growth areas for your child. While these are not mandatory meetings, we do hope you will plan on attending if possible. It is another way of communicating with the teachers and learning about your child's educational and social progress. Conferences may also be scheduled during other times throughout the school year if the parent or teacher feels it is necessary.

PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

For children with special needs, we ask that you provide us with all of the information that will help us meet the needs of your child. If your child is being seen by any type of therapist, reports are helpful as well as having your permission to talk or meet with the therapist if necessary. If your child is attending another program for children with special needs, we are obligated to meet with the team and be involved in the IEP meeting and other review meetings. Being open with us can only benefit your child.

SEPARATION AND YOUR CHILD

Separation is a normal part of growth that occurs in life. In order to engage in new opportunities, we need to let go of some familiar securities. We want to do everything in our power to ease the transition from home to school.

Here are some very important steps to follow:

1. Prior to school beginning, your child will have opportunities to meet your child's teacher, see the classroom and the other children.
2. On the first day of school, please know that the teachers and assistants are there to assist the transition. A hug, a kiss and a timely departure after the sign in process are often the best for everyone.
3. The teachers and assistants understand that your child may cry and be sad at your leaving. They will handle your child with comfort and respect. They will assist in the adjustment and feeling of security in the classroom.
4. Know that you may have just as difficult a time leaving your child for the first time as your child does leaving you. You can help your child's adjustment by understanding your own feelings of sadness at leaving your child in a school environment for the first time.
5. Remember, your child may experience separation anxiety at various times throughout the school year. Vacations, illnesses, family events, moving, and other disruptions in your child's routine can lead to separation issues. Please inform your teachers if you are experiencing any of these issues.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We realize the importance of parent-teacher/family-school relationships; therefore, we encourage participation in the classroom and throughout the school. Kinderhaven Preschool Academy offers a variety of ways for parents to show their support not only to their child, but to their child's school as well. You will be given a volunteer sheet at the beginning of the school year, so you can choose the right area of volunteer service. Participating in your child's school can be an enriching experience for you, your child, and the entire school!

If you have something special to share with the school, please contact the director or your child's teachers. They will be happy to put your talent or interest to work!

DAILY ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

- **It is important for the children to arrive on time.** Frequent late arrival can interfere with the child's time to choose an activity and develop social/play skills. It is also disruptive to the daily schedule. In addition, some children feel self-conscious when arriving late and may have difficulty separating and entering a group that is already engaged.
- **Promptness in picking up your child at the conclusion of the school day is very important!** The teachers depend of time between classes or at the end of the day to plan and reflect on their day. Also, your child may worry if his or her grown up is not there. Please notify us if you are going to be late for any reason. If tardiness in pick up becomes an ongoing issue, (being 10 minutes or more late 3 or more times) the parents will be asked to come in for a conference with the teachers and director in order to develop a plan of action to rectify the problem.

- Written permission is required for anyone but designated people to pick up your child. Children cannot be released without written permission. If a person is unknown to the teachers, assistants, or director, he or she may be asked for identification. Please know that this is for your child's protection.
- Arrival is a time for you and your child to greet the teachers and their friends. Please convey any information that may impact your child's participation that day during this time.

TRANSPORTATION

The Lake Forest Recreation Department and Kinderhaven Preschool Academy does not provide transportation or arrange "carpools." Class enrollment lists are provided in early September to parents. These lists may be used to coordinate rides among students by the parents or guardians.

No transportation is ever provided by staff members.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Parents will receive a school calendar with all important events and school holidays. **Kinderhaven Preschool Academy follows District #67 calendar!** So, if there is a question about a day off, please check not only our calendar, but District #67 as well.

Snow days or other weather emergency days are at the discretion of District #67; however, there may be times when we are not able to have school when the District has not cancelled school. Please call the Kinderhaven office at 847-810-3947 or the Recreation Department at 847-810-3947 if you have questions. The teachers and/or director will make every attempt to give parents enough time to reschedule their child's day if school will not be held.

Teachers and teachers' assistants will contact parents concerning an emergency school closing. If the class day has begun and an emergency closing is necessary, parents or guardians will be contacted immediately to arrange pick up. Your child will remain in the care of Kinderhaven until pick up can be arranged.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

PLEASE NOTE: ALL REQUIRED MEDICAL FORMS ARE IN YOUR REGISTRATION PACKET. PLEASE HAVE YOUR PHYSICIANS USE THESE FORMS.

Birth certificates are required! Please send a copy of the certificate with your child's registration packet.

It is a licensing and health department requirement that each child has a physical examination **NO LATER THAN 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF PRESCHOOL!** The required form is in your registration packet.

The background information, health history, with parent signature, immunizations, TB test and lead screening areas MUST BE FILLED OUT AND SIGNED by the physician. The TB test and lead screening need only be done once. If the physician feels that the TB test is not necessary, this must be documented on the form or included on a separate signed statement. This medical form and an emergency form must be kept on file in the school office.

Any child who attends school must be healthy and prepared to go outside. It is important to note that the classes will go outside if the weather is conducive. If the temperature is above 20 degrees with the wind chill, please have your child prepared to go outdoors.

Preschool is for children who are well, so in the interest of safeguarding the health of all students, children showing any signs of illness should be kept home until a proper diagnosis is made and treatment of the health condition is completed.

When a child contracts a contagious illness, parents MUST notify the school as soon as the illness is diagnosed. A child who has had a fever must be fever free (normal body temperature) for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

The school must be notified in writing of any allergy a child has and/or if medication is being taken. No medication will be dispensed by school staff without written procedures from the physician and signed release from the parent.

KINDERHAVEN SHOULD BE CALLED WHENEVER A CHILD WILL BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL: 847-810-3947.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of emergency, the parent will be called, and 911 will be called. If immediate medical treatment by a physician is warranted, we will make every effort to have a staff person accompany the child with the ambulance. The ambulance will go to Lake Forest Hospital. If you do not want us to follow the above protocol on the grounds of religious beliefs, please see the director to obtain an additional emergency release form. In the case of a life-threatening circumstances, the preschool reserves the right to seek traditional medical treatment.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND INCLUSION POLICY

Kinderhaven Preschool Academy is a DCFS-licensed, Reggio-inspired preschool that is committed to creating a warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all children and families. We do not discriminate in enrollment, employment, or the provision of services based on race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, family structure, or any other protected status.

At Kinderhaven, we believe every child is capable, valued, and deserving of a strong sense of belonging. As a Reggio-inspired school, we honor each child's individuality, background, abilities, and voice, and we strive to create a community where all students feel accepted, respected, and supported. We welcome children and families from all backgrounds and are committed to fostering kindness, inclusivity, and respect in every classroom and throughout our school community.

PESTICIDE SCHEDULE

The City of Lake Forest takes care of applying any and all pesticides to the surrounding grounds of the Lake Forest Parks and Recreation Building.

They spray once in the fall and once in the spring. A notice when the spraying will occur will be posted by the City 24 hours before the spraying will occur. No pesticides will ever be applied when children are present.

Please see the information book located in the entry way to get the approximate dates and types of the pesticide applications. Weather will determine the actual dates.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Kinderhaven promotes “redirection” when the teachers need to intervene in a child’s interaction with another child(ren) or with following directions with the teachers. The teachers will remind the child of the classroom rule and ask him/her to follow the rule. If the child is unable to comply, he or she will be “redirected” to a new activity or to a new area of the room.

There may be specific circumstances when a child may be asked to move away from another child or area of the room due to aggressive behavior or consistent antagonistic behavior. The teacher will take the child by the hand, sit them in a chair away from the activity, and explain to the child what the issue is. The child will rejoin the activity or return to the activity when the teacher feels the child is able to be respectful to the child or situation. The child may be asked to make amends to a child he or she hurt, and with the teacher’s guidance, he or she will find a way to do so.

If behavior problems persist, the teachers and the director may ask the parents for a conference to develop a plan of action to address the issues.

CLOTHING

We encourage children’s independence, so being able to manipulate their own clothing is important. We will be working with the children on putting on their own coats, boots, gloves, etc., as well as having them zip and unfasten their own clothing to use the restroom. Please follow the guidelines concerning clothing:

- Provide clothing that is loose and has simple fasteners.
- All removable clothing should be labeled with the child’s name, especially coats, jackets, sweaters, hats, mittens, and boots. This assists the teachers in making sure that each child has his or her appropriate clothing. It also helps your child to recognize his or her name and take responsibility for his or her belongings.

- Expect your child to get messy, so please dress him or her in clothing that can get dirty or messy. It is difficult for a child to fully participate in some classroom or outdoor activities if he or she is afraid of getting dirty. Paint, glue, sand, mud, water, and other art and sensory medium is part of the average preschool day, so please encourage your child to fully experience every aspect of preschool!
- Sneakers or close toed shoes are REQUIRED to ensure your child's safety indoors and outdoors. NO SANDALS OR OPEN-TOED SHOES, PLEASE!
- We try to go outside every day, even in the winter! We usually go out if the temperature is 20 degrees with the wind chill. Please dress your child for outdoor play no matter the weather!
- Please pack a daily change of clothing, including socks, in a backpack. Clearly label these items and check them occasionally to make sure the sizes are still able to fit your child.

POTTY TRAINING

Although Kinderhaven does not require that the students be fully potty trained, the teachers do not change diapers or pull-ups. In an event of a potty incident that your child is unable to deal with himself or herself, a parent or guardian will be expected to respond to a phone call within a reasonable amount of time (15 minutes maximum).

There is a larger bathroom with a changing area located by the racquetball courts in the recreation center's main hallway. If the parent or guardian does not answer within the allotted time, the next person on the contact list will be called.

Please indicate whether your child is potty trained at the beginning of the school year.

SNACKS/NUTRITION

Healthy and nutritional snacks are provided by Kinderhaven. We endeavor to serve snacks that promote good nutrition, and ones that represent two food groups.

Additionally, Kinderhaven has a board of health and nutrition parents. They regularly volunteer in the classrooms to provide health and nutrition-related activities.

WE ARE A PEANUT-FREE SCHOOL!

Nothing we serve has any type of nuts in it! We also check labels carefully to make sure our snacks are also not made in places where they might have contact with nuts; however, if your child has a nut allergy or any other food allergy, please inform the teachers or the director if there is ANY concern about a snack that is being served.

OUTSIDE FOOD OR CANDY IS NOT ALLOWED UNLESS APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR!

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special occasion for our children. We do, however, leave it up to the parents to discuss with the teachers about how and when and if they would like to celebrate their child's birthday at school. **Remember**, the teachers will not automatically celebrate your child's birthday without permission from you, so if your child's birthday is coming up, please inform the teachers. We want to respect everyone's beliefs concerning the celebration of birthdays at Kinderhaven.

Outside food/candy treats are not allowed at Kinderhaven due to serious food allergies. Goody bags containing pencils, small toys, stickers, etc., may be put in each child's cubby to go home, but these bags may not contain candy or food items.

If a parent asks the teachers to observe their child's birthday, "Happy Birthday" will be sung. A parent or guardian may choose to come in and read a book to the class or lead a craft project on behalf of the special birthday girl or boy.

Instead of bringing in treats like cupcakes or cookies, the birthday child may want to choose an item from the school's "Wish List" to donate to the school or he or she may want to donate his or her favorite book to the classroom.

These are wonderful ways for the child to feel that he or she is giving back to his or her school as well as celebrating his or her special day!

If your child is having a birthday party, and you would like to put invitations in the children's cubbies, you may on the condition that ALL of the children are invited. If you are inviting only a portion of the class for whatever reason, please send the invitations to the invited children's homes. This saves the feelings of those who are not invited.

HOLIDAYS

The staff does not provide any type of religious instruction. Customs observed by various countries and ethnic groups may be presented as part of the historical, geographical, or cultural program of the school. All activities, stories or explanations are designed with consideration of the children's developmental levels in mind. Parents are welcome to join with their child and present to the class their various traditions.

FIELD TRIPS

Most field trips are within walking distance from the school, such as the library or fire house; however, with the Reggio-inspired curriculum, other field trips tied to our projects may occur. If we need a bus, we will ask for parent volunteers to accompany us. You will also be asked to fill out a specific permission slip.

WISH LIST

A “Wish List” will be available during the first weeks of class. This list is compiled by the staff and contains items that would make great additions to the classroom. The list will be updated periodically throughout the year.

Please feel free to contribute a gift from the list at any point throughout the year.

FUNDRAISERS

There are a few fund raisers held for Kinderhaven throughout the year. The Parent Board designs and executes these events, and everyone is encouraged to participate. The school depends on these fun events, so please mark your calendars as soon as you are notified about them!

COMPASSION PROJECTS

Your child will become involved in “compassion projects” throughout the school year. These projects are designed to help your child realize that he or she can make a difference in the world, and that he or she has a unique responsibility to become actively involved. The projects will tie in with the classroom’s studies and will most likely involve your child working to make a financial contribution in some manner. Please encourage your child’s involvement in these types of projects.

BASIC SCHOOL RULES FOR FUN AND SAFETY

- Always walk in the classroom and hallways.
- Use inside voices; save loud voices for outside.
- Sit on your bottom when riding trikes, sliding down the slide, and swinging on swings.
- Stay in the classroom unless you are leaving with an adult.
- Do not open the classroom doors unless a teacher or adult give you permission.
- Sit on chairs with feet on the floor.
- **No weapons, war-like toys or play will be permitted.**
- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Use respectful words when talking with friends and teachers.
- Respect all living things, including the plants outside, each other, and the insects and animals that visit us.
- **HAVE FUN, MAKE FRIENDS, AND LEARN, GROW, AND EXPLORE!!**

KINDERHAVEN PRESCHOOL ACADEMY LAKE FOREST PARKS & RECREATION

PARENT HANDBOOK STATEMENT

- I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE PARENT HANDBOOK
- I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND IT
- I AGREE TO ABIDE BY ALL OF THE PROVISIONS THEREIN

Parent/guardian Signature

Date

KINDERHAVEN

PRESCHOOL



ACADEMY

LAKE FOREST PARKS AND RECREATION

The staff of Kinderhaven is being more and more influenced by the philosophy and approach from Reggio Emilia, Italy, and we, as a staff and program, continue to explore and integrate these concepts, and interpret these concepts for our own culture. Below are such beliefs and concepts based on this approach.

- We believe that children are strong, capable, competent, curious, and all have great potential and a desire to learn.
- Children are viewed in terms of their relationships: to each other, teachers, family, the community, and their environment. The emphasis is on working and learning in small groups.
- Children express themselves through many “languages”. Words (spoken and written), drawings/ paintings, building, sculpture, collage, dramatic play, music. Children use many materials to explore and express themselves. All “languages” are symbolic representations of what they know and understand, what they are curious about, what they feel and imagine.
- The environment is designed with purpose and intent, beauty and order. It is considered “the Third Teacher”. The environment encourages interactions, communication and the development of relationships. The classroom is valued and cared for by both children and adults.
- Teachers observe, listen to and interact with the children. They ask them thought provoking questions and guide children through investigation, discovery and exploration of themes and short and longer-term projects, and incorporate all of the skills necessary for further education.
- Teachers work together, develop and maintain strong collaborative relationships with each other. Discussion of their work and the children’s work is constant. Teachers are seen as researchers as they document their work with children and the children’s learning.
- Documentation is composed of photographs, videotape, written transcriptions of children’s actual words, written descriptions of projects and the learning process. Documentation provides a means for children to revisit their work, teachers to reflect on the children’s work and the learning process, and parents to gain a better understanding of the learning process and how children represent their learning. Documentation is also in the form of a portfolio for each child giving a visual representation of his or her learning.
- Parents are an important part of the child’s education and should be active in this learning process. Parents may act as participants in education through working in the classroom and for the good of the school, through discussions with teachers, and sharing their thoughts and ideas.

KINDERHAVEN CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

The development of our hands-on, experiential curriculum for 2 ½ to 5 ½ year olds is based on scientific research that tells us about the development of young children's brains. We are told that it is through the use and development of children's sensory - motor systems and through thinking (developing ideas and questions) that growth of neural connections in the brain takes place. For instance, we believe that, while it is important to learn the ABC's and numbers (names for the letters and numbers), it is as or even more important to learn what they are and for children to begin to understand and use them. As Webster defines "thinking: ... as to form or have in the mind; to judge; to consider; to believe, expect or reason; to use the mind; to reflect; to have an opinion", we believe that developing this ability is extremely important to the learning process. We also know that the type of environment a child is in, and interactions that he/she has plays a significant role in this development. It is our role as early childhood educators to provide learning experiences and an environment conducive to such development.

The Kinderhaven Curriculum includes ten (10) areas of Early Childhood Development. These areas are:

- Social-emotional & Character Development
- Self-help
- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Art
- Sensory
- Communication (receptive and expressive)
- Cognition (incl. thinking skills, reading, math & science)
- Dramatic Play
- Music and movement

What follows on the next several pages is an outline of the curricular areas mentioned above and how they pertain to the Kinderhaven Program. This is written to give you an idea of our developmental curriculum in each of the areas.

1. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

When children have a positive self-image, they learn better at school.

The social-emotional curriculum fosters growth in a variety of ways. Through care and respect, children are helped to feel comfortable at school, while they are away from their families. When separation from the family is a factor, we will work with the child and family to ease this transition.

We believe that self-esteem is developed through accomplishment and acknowledgement of that

accomplishment. Learning experiences are provided that are at the child's level, and/or just above the child's level, all with just enough challenge so that each child will experience success and further their development.

Children at the 2 ½ and 3-year level are solitary players. As they grow, they go through a process where they parallel play (play along-side others), begin to play with another child and then, as they become more skilled socially, they are able to play in a small group of children interactively. The teachers observe the children's play skills, engage in play with them, model positive social behavior, promote social awareness and the skills necessary for social play and getting along with others. We model respect for each other and for care of our environment and promote care, respect, and compassion within the classroom.

2. SELF-HELP

At the younger age, children need reminders to wash hands (with soap!), dry their hands, go to the bathroom, and when to do these things. As they develop, the reminders and assistance should become less necessary. Dressing skills progress from the initial ability of undressing self, trying to dress self, being adept at dressing (except for fasteners), to independence around the kindergarten age. Tying shoes is one of the last skills to be developed, sometimes around 1st grade. Children learn to manipulate eating utensils; they learn to serve themselves from a small serving bowl, small pitcher, and assist in setting the table. Throughout the stages of development, the teachers monitor and assist when necessary and offer encouragement and praise. The child may be able to complete part of the skill and need assistance with the rest. The teacher is there to promote learning and independence. Teachers will also promote healthy habits (ie. using soap, washing hands after going to the bathroom, before snack, before and after handling a pet, and after sneezing/blowing their nose).

We ask that as your children gain skills in these areas that we all work together to help your child become as independent as they are ready to become. For example, facilitate them washing their own hands through verbal explanations rather than doing it for them. Likewise, encourage them to learn to hang up their own coats. Even though children may complain at times, generally they feel a sense of accomplishment when they can take care of their own belongings.

3. GROSS MOTOR

We know that gross motor skills are the basis for the development of all other motor skills, and have an impact on the development of reading, writing, language, social skills, and higher-level athletic skills. At each stage of development, children engage in learning balance and coordination. Children take in information about their bodies and movement through their eyes, their muscles, tactile (or touch) system and through the organs in their inner ear that respond to movement and help develop balance. The curriculum for developing gross motor skills includes a variety of games and activities. Some of these include using the parachute, obstacle courses, music and movement games and the use of outdoor and indoor play equipment. Gross motor activities are a part of each and every day, taking the

form of activities that the children choose and activities that the teachers facilitate to promote further development in the children.

4. FINE MOTOR

Before children have the fine muscle control for skilled writing, artwork, or other hand skills, children must use their hands in ways that will develop the muscles involved in those skills. Children progress from using a whole fist grasp to a thumb and finger grasp as used by adults and children generally three years of age and above. Children progress from whole arm movements to controlled use of their hands and fingers. In our program, children are provided with many daily opportunities to develop these skills. Activities such as working with play dough, clay or other moldable mediums allow children to use and strengthen the hand muscles needed for writing tasks. Teachers provide the children with daily art activities which use and will enhance their fine motor skills. Encouragement is given to participate in activities such as building with various construction materials, using small pegs, stringing beads, gears and other such manipulatives. In addition to providing the children with these activities, the teachers encourage them, work alongside of them and monitor their progress.

5. ART

The process of developing skill in and an interest in art begins with scribbling, as does the beginning of writing. Early scribbling is random and may contain some patterns. Children begin scribbling with circular motions, then progress to horizontal and vertical motions, then diagonals. They begin with singular scribbles, then combinations. Following this, children's art moves toward representational art and pictures that are recognizable (usually between the ages of 4 and 5, although earlier than this they may name or describe their art).

The art curriculum is four-fold: (1) that children take an interest in art, and begin to develop an appreciation for art; (2) that children are utilizing many mediums and utensils for developing their skills; (3) that children develop their creativity; and (4) that children represent their understanding of their world through art. The teachers provide daily opportunities for these to take place. The children are offered various mediums for exploring art, many types of utensils for broadening their usage of art materials and the time, guidance, and encouragement needed for the children's development and expression of their ideas.

“ART is the lively process of an engagement with a range of materials: an engagement that is sensual and reflective, creative and deliberate, and that deepens and extends children's learning and their communication about their feelings, their ideas, and their questions.”

Ann Pelo “Exploring the Hundred Languages; Using Art Media with Young Children”

In the 2 ½ and 3-year-old classes, the primary emphasis will be on children's exposure and exploration of a variety of materials. Through their exploration of media such as clay, tempera and watercolors, other paints, sculpting wire, and various types of paper, and other materials, they will learn some of the

mediums' properties. They will become comfortable with ways that they can manipulate the materials, begin to learn to create with them, and talk about their work.

“ART for the child is something quite different (than for an adult). For a child, art is primarily a means of expression...A child is a dynamic being; art becomes a language of thought, so that art expression changes as the child grows.”

Victor Lowenfeld (Creative and Mental Growth)

In the 4- and 5-year-old classes, emphasis will be on developing their physical skills and at representing their ideas and knowledge through their art. Children will be exposed to and learn about various artists styles and ways to use the various media. Building on their growing knowledge and experience of art materials, they will be encouraged and be guided to develop their own individual creativity, and to discuss theirs and others' artwork.

PURPLE CLASSES: the emphasis in this class is on participating in various works of finger- painting, using brushes, various types of paints, collage materials, wire and other textured materials, clay, playdough and other mixtures. The children are exposed to the vocabulary of art including color words, texture words and visual description of words. Work is self-directed with some possible project or theme related work. Children explore paper and various textures. Some work will be brought home other work will be documented and kept in the child's portfolio.

BLUE CLASS: in addition to reinforcing the above, color mixing will expand to mixing with white or black to make tints and shades. Children use various paints, including tempera, water, cake tempera, and palette watercolors. A large variety of collage materials is available and experimentation with a variety of attachment devices is offered. Children are encouraged to sculpt with wire and clay. Sketching of their observations and ideas is promoted. Children are introduced to various artists and styles.

GREEN AND RED CLASS: in addition to reinforcing the above, children mix their own colors, use of various paint media is expanded to include oil pastels and ways of using watercolors; use of variety of paper, introduction of various artists and styles, use of clay, collage materials, wire, to represent ideas and observations and facilitation for children to work at higher levels of expression.

5. COMMUNICATION

A. Receptive: Through modeling, guidance, and facilitation, children work on their listening skills throughout various opportunities during the class-time. Incorporated into receptive communication is the ability to remember and comprehend. Children will also learn to distinguish between sounds and how they are used.

B. Expressive: We believe that children communicate through various expressive “languages”. These expressions take form through their verbal language, their art, play-acting, constructions, movement and interactions with each other and their materials. Children let us know their ideas, thoughts and feelings through these various “languages.”

We are committed to providing continual opportunities for the children to develop vocabulary, to expand their sentence structure and word usage, and learn about the association between letter sounds and the letters themselves. The teachers also promote creative thinking and the children’s confidence to use these skills. This is done through 1:1 or group activities, discussion, story dictation, labeling of pictures, play acting and learning about new ideas and concepts. Children will engage in group or individual story creation and beginning writing of letters, words and numbers throughout their various learning experiences.

6. COGNITIVE

Cognition takes in many areas of development. These areas include, but are not limited to: the development of memory skills, curiosity, formulating questions, and an interest in learning; gaining knowledge of self and the world around them. We promote the use of numbers and letters, observational skills and logical thinking skills. Throughout the class-time teachers provide activities that utilize various materials and engage the children’s senses, minds and motor abilities and facilitate learning. We provide opportunities to use already developed skills and enough challenge and encouragement to foster growth and development. Teachers ask open-ended, thought-provoking questions that stimulate thinking and curiosity to learn. Specific “academic” areas of development that also fall into this category are math, science and language arts (reading and writing).

• **MATH:** In the GREEN and PURPLE classes math learning is primarily on an individual level, is hands-on and experiential, and includes singing, puzzles, sequencing, shapes of circle, square, and triangle, and simple counting and exposure to simple math language.

In the BLUE and RED Classes math is experiential and thought provoking, generally on an individual or small group basis, and some large groups. The above concepts are reinforced and counting objects will increase. Sorting and classifying by multiple characteristics, working with more complex patterns, making comparisons adding small numbers in their heads and working out simple word problems are promoted.

• **SCIENCE:** In all classes curiosity and wonder are encouraged and built upon. Science learning is hands-on and experiential. Activities are presented in a multi-sensory fashion. Children are exposed to and become familiar with proper terminology. Children’s questions are regarded as important and will be encouraged to use their questions as a basis for discussion and research. In addition:

In the GREEN and PURPLE classes, children will explore their natural environment and topics will solely relate to close, observable happenings. In the BLUE class, children will explore their natural environment, classroom pet, concepts of night and day, basic needs of living things, relationships

of living things. They will be introduced to the scientific method. In the RED class, the above will be reinforced and they will be introduced to magnets, gravity and earth in relationship to the universe. Topics will be explored at a deeper level. Use of the scientific method will be promoted.

• **LANGUAGE ARTS:** There are various ways in which children communicate their ideas, thoughts, questions, perceptions, and beliefs. Commonly a language arts curriculum includes listening, reading, and writing. We believe that art expression, dance, drama, and music also are part of the way in which children communicate, and thus, should be a part of the language arts curriculum. In all classes, books are always available. Reading is always a part of each day. Reading includes nursery rhymes, poetry, good children's literature, and literature that supports projects. Questions and discussions about the readings are encouraged. Children have many opportunities to use a variety of writing implements. In the GREEN and PURPLE classes reading is individual and in groups. Children have opportunities to act out nursery rhymes. Scribbling represents the beginning of writing. The art curriculum supports language arts through its use as self-expression. Children have opportunities to interpret and move to music and engage in dramatic play. In the BLUE class stories and poetry are a little more complex. There are more and longer discussions. Writing opportunities are available in various parts of the room. Children begin printing letters and name, begin sounding out words and making a connection between letters and sounds. Children have opportunities to interpret meaning and thought through books, poetry, music, dance, art, and drama. Look for more detail in their work. In the RED class children will have the same opportunities as above. Facilitation will encourage higher levels of representation. In addition, children will engage in journal writing, printing of their name and some words, sounding out more words and letter sounds associations. Discussions, questions and explanations are expected to be at a higher level.

7. DRAMATIC PLAY

Through dramatic play children of all ages develop many abilities and skills. Children develop their imagination and creative thinking skills. This play promotes social interaction, social negotiation and problem solving. Through participation in dramatic play children develop the ability to take on new roles and engage in imagination and pretending. This also gives them the opportunity to take on a new perspective and to develop empathy. The children can also use role-playing to act out situations in their own lives and come to an understanding of a particular situation. Dramatic play gives children the opportunity to use and develop their verbal communication, creativity and develop an interest in stories, storytelling and plot development. This, in turn, assists in literacy development and an interest in reading.

Teachers provide a stimulating, yet comfortable environment that fosters dramatic play. Children are able to take on different roles through dress-up clothes, props and puppets. Teachers observe children's play, engage in dramatic play with them, extending their language and thought process. Teachers may pose situations or stories for the children to role-play. Children may become a part of acting out short stories such as simple nursery rhymes, short stories, to acting out short stories that they've authored.

8. MUSIC

This part of the curriculum is designed to expose children to a variety of types of music (i.e. classical, jazz, calypso and simple children's songs) and music with various ethnic influences. Through this children can learn to appreciate many different sounds. Through the use of music and musical instruments children will explore musical sounds and the use of instruments. (Green and Purple Classes: rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, tambourines; Yellow Class: same plus handled castanets and tone blocks; Blue and Red Classes: same plus triangle, xylophone and piano, and learning about rhythm, pitch, beat, melody and tempo, and notes as symbols). They will be exposed to and learn many of the names of instruments while using them. Through music, children will experience movement to music, how to keep a beat, singing and using music to have fun. Musical experiences may also improve their listening skills, attention span and memory skills. Many researchers say that learning and participating in musical activities has a positive impact on learning math and language.

In all of the classes, light music is played as background music during center time, small group or snack time. The children have daily opportunities to sing and move to music.

9. SENSORY

Children learn about themselves and their environment through the use of their senses. We provide an environment that stimulates and/or requires the children to use their senses of vision, auditory, smell, taste, tactile and kinesthetic senses. We encourage children to use their senses when engaging in activities throughout the classroom.

People may all have a predominant sense that they use to take in information. Some of us are predominantly visual learners, auditory learners or tactile/kinesthetic learners. But people, especially children, have potential to develop their other senses, which will enhance their learning capabilities

SUMMARY

One can see that all learning is a very interdependent process. In learning how to think, in skill development and gaining knowledge, we use our senses, take in information, interpret and process this information and then act on it.

Writing with a pencil – a task that most of us take for granted – is not such a simple task. It is a very interdependent process that relies on the eyes, muscles and joints and sensory feedback.

Children learn through interaction with each other, their teachers and other adults, and their environment. We provide an environment and specific learning experiences in which children can develop, grow and learn. We set up specific learning situations in which all these areas are promoted and enhanced. We help children develop tools to take with them to higher academic, social, artistic, and skill levels. And we provide opportunities for them to gain knowledge about themselves and the world around them.

Together with you, their parents, we strive to enrich the lives of your children and help prepare them for their future.

PROJECTS, THEMES & UNITS

The teachers at Kinderhaven support various approaches to learning and see the value in each of these. The staff endeavors to develop learning experiences, themes and longer-term projects that are interesting to the children and base this on expressed/observed interests of currently enrolled children, general knowledge of what children's interests are, and on knowledge about what children need to know. You may find some repetitions from year to year. As all knowledge is built on previous knowledge, this repetition gives the teachers the opportunity to expand on and enhance children's learning. In other words, children will be learning at a higher level.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline is consistent throughout the classes at Kinderhaven Preschool Academy, and the teachers are trained in the appropriate process. The following are the steps that are taken by the teachers.

1. The child will receive a verbal correction. If he or she is not following teacher directions or making a minor infraction of the classroom or playground policies or rules as set up by the children or the teacher, he or she will be given a verbal correction. He or she will be encouraged to make a different choice, and he or she will be given other options for correcting his or her behavior.
2. If the child is displaying violence toward another child, such as hitting, kicking, spitting, or any other act of physical violence, he or she will be removed from the situation immediately. "Quiet time" will be instituted, and the child will be asked to sit away from the group for no more than 2-5 minutes (this will correspond with his or her age).
3. The teacher will discuss the act with the child, helping them search for a more positive way to solve his or her differences. Additionally, the teacher will develop a way to make amends for the act he or she committed against the other child, i. e., make a picture, give a hug, verbally say, "I'm sorry," etc.
4. The parent/guardian will be contacted if the child's choices do not improve or if the teacher feels the child's choices are disruptive to the class or are dangerous to himself or herself or others.

Behavior correcting will be completed in a positive manner, encouraging the child's independence concerning his or her actions in the classroom and toward his or her friends. In all of the classes, the teachers will encourage the children to "respect all living things, and the classroom."