

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the school year!

I am so excited to invite your child on this preschool adventure.

Your children are full of natural wonder, creativity, and enthusiasm. My goal is that your children leave this class overflowing with skills, prepared and eager for all that life and kindergarten have to offer. The skills we support in preschool will not be used solely in kindergarten but will be foundational for happy, healthy future lives.

Kindergarten teachers often give feedback that the most successful students are not necessarily ones with academic knowledge but rather ones with strong executive functioning skills. Children who can follow the rules and routines of the classroom, who can participate in a group, who can handle changes that come up, and who know how to communicate and handle emotions, are the children who thrive in kindergarten. This magic list of skills has nothing to do with ABCs and 123s.

12 Executive Functioning Skills

- Self-restraint
- Working memory
- Emotional control
- Focus
- Task initiative
- Planning and prioritization
- Organization
- Time management
- Defining and achieving goals
- Flexibility
- Observation
- Stress tolerance

You can expect your children to fill their days with:

- Reading books
- Dramatic play
- Sensory play
- Painting
- Drawing
- Building
- Constructing
- Observing the natural world
- Fostering relationships with peers
- Building a classroom community and family
- Learning about people and families that might not look like ours

All of the above will be lovingly taught in a space that nurtures your child. Our mission is to love children where they currently are and help them reach the next goal one step at a time. You can expect to see projects that encourage learning in cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language domains. Your children will also be leaders who will, at most, help determine which areas we study. I will provide the framework and support to extend that learning.

Joseph Chilton Pearce said, "Play is the royal road to childhood happiness and adult brilliance." Both research and my observations of children have shown this to be true for me. My teaching follows a litmus test. Are the children learning, AND are the children having fun? I believe when you do both, you are giving your best to your students.

An important aspect of our year will be examining our place in this world, both in our families and communities. A strong foundation of social skills, as well as a respect for nature and our community, will guide our curriculum. I want each child to know how valued and loved they are and that, at the end of the day, we must learn to work together. We will expand our understanding of conflict resolution and dig deeper into exploring our emotions. We will discuss the difference between feelings and behaviors and work to broaden our understanding of how our behaviors affect others. Studies show that this kind of emotional intelligence helps children grow to be happy and emotionally healthy young adults.

What can you do to set YOUR child up for success this year and the future?

- Prioritize person-to-person engagement
- Daily me in nature and outside
- Read books daily and model yourself reading
- Teach your child to keep up with their items (clothes, backpack, lunches)
- Have your child do chores
- Don't solve your children's problems for them

I know all of these things are easier said than done! I hope that we can talk more on some of these subjects during the year and I hope to offer what ps and tricks I can.

Lastly, as you prepare for the start of school, make sure that your child can open and close all of their lunch containers, bars, and yogurt containers. A great way to do this is to pack your child's lunch like you normally would for school and let them do EVERYTHING themselves.

Class supplies:

A spiral notebook or composition book

Make sure everything is labeled with your child's first name and last initial (water bottle/snack/lunch).

Enjoy the tail end of summer, and I will see you soon!

Parent Orientation will be held virtually on Thursday, August 10. The link will be sent via Brightwheel

Class visits will be held on August 11 and 14 and will be open house style. Times will be announced via Brightwheel.

Warmly,

Stacy Prence