

# *Blue Sky Kindergarten's* Handbook of Policies and Procedures

Welcome to our School Community!

Open to all that surrounds them, young children live in a world of wonder and possibility. The kindergarten with its environment of warm interest and gentle engagement serves as a bridge between the security of home and the challenge of primary school.

There is a great truth in the saying “it takes a village to raise a child.” The children truly live in what we are able to create together. Welcome.

## The Daily

“Rhythm and soul warmth are the child’s strongest support in incarnation.” When they know what to expect and depend on, children relax and grow in confidence. In our kindergarten, therefore, we build a strong rhythmic element into our day. The same sequence of events occurs each day – a breathing in and out of activities. We walk out into our neighborhood; come in for our morning circle and snack; breathe out into inside play, activities of the child’s choosing. We breathe into our cleaning chores and the ordering of our classroom; breathe out into active outside play. Then in once more for our story time and picnic lunch and then out into the arms of Mother and Father.

## The Weekly

Accompanying the Play is the domestic activity of the day. Baking, soup-making, cooking, cleaning, mending, and seasonal activities bring the child into a caring relationship with their world. In the preschool/kindergarten, we are but one step removed from “home” and believe the children need the soul warmth of the domestic to truly thrive.

## The Yearly

A larger Seasonal thread runs throughout our program with the preparation for and celebration of The Festivals. These celebrations mark our progression through the cycle of the year. Each Season has its mood, which the child energetically mirrors. The busyness of Harvest, the inwardness of Winter, the antsiness of Spring all find their expression through story, song, and meaningful work. In the Fall, the wheat is threshed, winnowed, and ground into flour for the baking of the Harvest Loaf. A golden sword is cut, hammered, and rasped to bring the last rays of the Summer Sun deep into the approaching dark of Winter. Each child makes their own lantern to house a spark of dwindling light. A Festival of the Renewal of the Light is celebrated at the Solstice with our Spiral Garden Ceremony. Winter finds us building fires and dipping candles. We wash, dye, card, and spin a wool fleece into yarn for our finger knitting, felting, and weaving projects. In Spring, we live in the garden: planting, weeding, composting, and investigating all of Mother Earth's helpers.

## Play

Our curriculum at Blue Sky is "play oriented." We believe Play to be the foundation of creative thinking. All that we offer through storytelling, puppetry, and teacher's work, feeds and deepens the young child's fluid forces of Imagination. The simpler the toy or material, the more inwardly active the child needs to be. The children always have plenty of raw materials at hand to construct each day's constantly transforming drama.

"A child, as well as an adult, needs plenty of what in German is called Spielraum. Now, Spielraum is not primarily "a room to play in." While the word also means that, its primary meaning is "free scope, plenty of room" – to move not only one's elbows but also one's mind, to experiment with things and 'toy' with new ideas. Developing a rich inner life is one of the most constructive things a growing child can do."

Bruno Bettelheim

## Environment

Young children have faith and trust in the people near them. For a deep seated inner confidence to grow, it is important that their world in these early years be one of goodness, beauty and truth. The education of the young child at this age is really an education of their developing senses. Here at Blue Sky we put great emphasis on the kindergarten surroundings. Everything in our rosy rooms is made with natural materials and from the handiwork of an Artisan, Parent or Teacher. Seth's Dad built the cubbies, Leah's Mom hemmed the aprons, Mindy makes a doll for each child. In this way, a web of warmth and caring is woven about the child.

## Movement

The young child is in constant movement. This is how they exercise and integrate their tactile, vestibular, and proprioceptive systems and orient themselves in space. Later, when the child is presented with more abstract learning, they will be better able to attend and complete their school tasks with ease and satisfaction because their large motor systems have automated and serve as support. In light of the sensory learning integration difficulties assaulting today's child, a deliberate consciousness of the young child's movement experience becomes more essential.

At Blue Sky, a daily walk or outside movement journey precedes a morning Circle Time. A playful seasonal compilation of poetry recited with appropriate gestures, rhythmic circle games, finger plays, songs, and expressive dance to piano, flute, or drum all enrich and enliven the young child's feeling for speech, dance, and music as well as develop a social sensibility.

## Handwork and the Education of the Fine Motor Senses

The young child's domain is more of the Craft than the Arts. And though the usefulness of the end product is important, we are more interested in the experimentation and satisfaction involved in the process. At Blue Sky we honor the many ways of doing things – the spirit of invention always at hand. At this age, they are learning how to learn.

Watercolor painting, sewing, woodwork, pottery, basketry, beeswax modeling, felting, weaving, and nature crafts of all kinds are offered on a daily, weekly, or seasonal basis. All unite the child with their own creative forces.

### Non-Academic Philosophy

At Blue Sky, we consider our educational approach non-academic in that we leave the more formal presentation of numbers and letters for the child's later schooling. We believe the mathematical concepts of shape, pattern, category, and one-to-one correspondence are understood best through more organic and less abstracted experience. And that scientific inquiry is best grounded in a sense of wonder and curiosity that has more to do with "living the question" than accumulating fixed facts.

"Education is not about filling a bucket but lighting a fire." William  
Butler Yeats

### Storytelling and the Ground of Literacy

Dear story take me by the hand  
And lead me to a starry land  
Stars sing to me while I'm asleep  
Their loving watch forever keep  
    An yet it happened a long, long time ago  
    And yet it could have been this very day...

Children deeply experience sunlight and darkness, sparkling frost, flickering fire, and mud puddles. Brother Wind, Mother Earth, Jacky Frost, and Squirrel Nutkin all have something to say to the young child. By acknowledging the "speaking" aspect of our world, we cultivate a certain "listening" in the children – which lays the ground for literacy.

In our Kindergarten, we tell simple fairytales and stories from the animal and elemental worlds. These stories are told, not read, for in this way the teacher can enter into the tale with the children in a deeper, more intimate way. They story, with all its rich imagery and elaborate language, is repeated word for word on several occasions. Then

sometimes it is presented as a puppet play or acted out by the class. Storytelling unites the child with his or her own journey, and kindles wisdom, kindness, and courage.

“I sincerely believe that for the child it is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow. The years of early childhood are the time to prepare the soil.”

Rachel Carson

### Social Development and Discipline

Discipline is difficult to talk about in a general way because there are so many variables in any given situation. How old is the child? What is their temperament? Is it the beginning of the year or close to the end? Is Mom out of town? Is there a new baby in the house? Etc., etc., etc. Generally the young child is moving out of an appropriately self-centered “Me” state into relationship with the mysterious “other.” And all the accompanying social struggles provide necessary information and are ultimately strengthening.

We, as Parents and Educators, play an important role in this process. Discipline has the same Latin root as Disciple. This makes sense when you think that the young child’s strongest mode of learning at this age is one of devoted imitation. This is how they have learned to walk and speak. Often one sees in the child the mannerisms or gait of the Parent. The young child ventures out into their world but always at some point they glance back to check their progress with us. We, as Adults, are their point of orientation. And in the social realm at this age – we are their conscience. Our inner attitude as well as what we say becomes internalized and at a later stage becomes that little voice inside that keeps them on the straight, narrow and true. As we know this inner voice can be positive or positively undermining. Our responsibility is great. Children want and need to please us. So much of what we do to “control” their behavior can be manipulative: praising, shaming, rewarding, punishing. All move us further away from our goal for the child of self-control. Echoes of what our Parents said to us arise unbidden and must be consciously sorted through.

All this being said, what is it that we do at Blue Sky? First, we work hard on our bond with your child, so that our disciplining is strongly rooted in love and warmth of interest. This is achieved through the home visit, in your sharing of the child's birth story at our first conference and in our teacher's meetings and daily contemplations about your children.

Outwardly we create a daily rhythm for the child's activity. Periods of expansive free play are followed by periods of gathering and focus and then a release out once more. This consistent breathing throughout our day allows the child to relax and go with the flow. They grow to know in their bones what to expect and a fair amount of resistance is pacified and disappears. Through songs and simple rituals, the child's energy is shaped. A song for washing hands becomes a lighthouse amidst the chaotic sea of hanging up coats and coming to the table.

Playtime and Teacher's work go hand in hand for several reasons. Our devotion to our work of baking, soup making, sewing, etc., can create a tangible mood in the room for deep play. Children always play in a more relaxed way when an adult is near but physically engaged. Make note that we said physically, for this unfortunately doesn't work when we're on the telephone or trying to compose a letter, etc. With our hands purposefully engaged, our consciousness can expand throughout the room or garden. We are the hub of the wheel, the center. Simply our moving near, ostensibly to adjust a curtain or perhaps fetch some scissors can often avert a difficult situation. We might take our sewing and sit next to the little house with the fussy princesses. Magically the situation diffuses. Later in the year, we may allow more of these situations to come to a head because at that stage that is where the learning is.

At Blue Sky, we believe in Time In rather than Time Out. Time Out may have its place at home where the situation is 24/7. But at school, every situation has its teaching. In all the Teacher's activities, there is always room for the child's participation. The child who is struggling socially can be brought into our work where they can re-center themselves and then go back out to "try again." The youngest children happily pound bread dough all the while taking in the play swirling around them. Children who are too loud, too fast or too excited are met first with "inside voices!" or "walking feet, walking feet, walking up and down the street" sung to the room in general or next the child may be called in to the Teacher to take a little break or take a few breaths or perhaps have a drink of water. All teach the child something about their state of being. Children come into the world

knowing how to be stimulated but they need to be taught how to recover; how to regroup, come back to themselves.

At Blue Sky there are things that we say in a general sort of way to the group as a whole that we hope over time will sink in a little deeper. They are somewhat along the line of an Affirmation.

“At Blue Sky we all play together.”

“We all want to play.”

“No one wants to be left out.”

“At Blue Sky we use our golden words – words that make people feel good.”

“I heard ‘please stop!’ Those are magic words.”

When a child is pestering a group of children, the first thing we say is:

“Maybe he wants to play too.”

Towards the end of the year, we hear the children say to each other: “‘Nobody wants to be left out’ or ‘Maybe she wants to play too, let’s ask her.’” It is wonderful.

Children learn all the virtues of generosity, patience, perseverance, etc. directly from us. If I’m feeling impatient, you can be certain they will start fussing at each other too. So much of disciplining is self-discipline.

We teach our assistants to move into a situation of conflict and just create space. We try not to rush in to fix or mediate or with any pre-conceived technique or agenda. We feel that all that is needed exists in that moment. We move in quickly to stop the hurting. After that we consciously breathe to create a little gap. After this pause, we can acknowledge the feelings present. Often, this is all that is needed. Once they hear each other, the solution becomes obvious. It is their friend, after all, who is so upset and they were just getting to the good part of the game. Play is a great socializer. Sometimes they just need a little perspective. “It looks like we need a plan,” is all that the Teacher needs to say and they are off arguing about whose turn it should be and what would be fair, etc. -- which they need to do for their control to arise from within. Today’s child’s world is too full of adult mediated experiences.

And then there are those situations when someone has been hurt – “on purpose” – the child sobs deeply wounded. It always takes two in these situations – the aggressor and the victim. Both have learning to do and we don’t want the child to solidify in either position. The children are brought together with the Teacher. The aggressor witnesses the victim’s pain and the Teacher models comforting and care – an icepack, a band-aid, a drink of water, a gentle stroke. Children become quite proficient at this type of care. They have boundless reservoirs of compassion. All this action and attitude is more effective than any verbal admonishment. When the situation has progressed sufficiently, then the two are left sitting together with the words: When William (the aggressor) has fixed it with Harry (the victim), then Harry will tell William he can get up. The Teacher then moves away but not too far. In this way, the victim is empowered and the children work together to restore their bond. We don’t say: “You must say you’re sorry.” This can be an empty expression. Children find their own way. Some chat about other things. Some make jokes. Some victims make their aggressors wait a long time. And you can be sure that child won’t be wronged again in the near future. Other children can’t bear to make their friend suffer. “It’s okay,” they say far too quickly -- but maybe not so quickly the next time.

Children have to learn through experience. All our analysis and advice falls on fairly deaf ears. The young child is not at a reflective, verbal stage. They are “in” their experience. We can nag and nag at our child to not slam the door with no effect. But if we catch the child in the moment and cheerfully take him/her by the hand saying, “let’s try that again.” And then take him/her physically through the act in the proper way. And be willing to do that again and perhaps again, we will find that the physical correction sinks in far more quickly and effectively.

At Blue Sky, we don’t believe in too much verbal processing for the young child. We feel it can be developmentally inappropriate and generally not very effective. We find that when we say little, what we do say and mean and carry through on, has more impact.

At the ages of three, four, five and six, the child’s emotions and strategies are primal and transparent. All too soon they take on a more civilized veneer and it becomes harder to know what they’re feeling and what they are operating from. Some children are very precocious intellectually while being very young socially and emotionally. It is our job as Parents and Teachers to be sure that faculties of the heart are exercised and developed as well as faculties of the head and hand. Children are in constant

transformation. We must be equally as fluid in our perception of who they are. At the same time, our love and warm interest remains constant.

## Media

A concern for the effect that electronic media (television, movies, videos and computer games) has on the young child's development has existed in the Waldorf Community for many years. It is now becoming a more mainstream concern as the result of more and more studies are tallied. In brief:

### Ten Main Concerns for Children Viewing Television

- 1) From birth to age seven is the time period for developing the will and television jeopardizes the ability to initiate and follow through with ideas and goals.
- 2) Television destroys the capacity of the viewer to attend and decreases vigilance. The television watching state of mind is a form of distraction as opposed to concentration and focalization.
- 3) Television induces alpha brain waves of a "non-learning mode" that are addictive.
- 4) Joseph Chilton Pearce, noted specialist on brain development, is most concerned about the ready-made images that television floods the child's brain with at the very time his/her brain is supposed to learn to make images from within. Television feeds both stimulus and response into the young child's brain as a single paired effect, and that is where the danger lies. As a result, much structural coupling between mind and environment is eliminated; few metaphoric images develop; fewer cortical areas of the brain are called into play; virtually no symbolic structures develop.
- 5) Television encourages distorted thinking about reality and values when the child needs genuine experiences. When the television is on, it freezes everybody; they're all expressionless, focused on the image on the screen, and everything that goes on between people – the games, the arguments, emotional scenes, out of which personality and ability develop – is stopped. So, when you turn on

television, you turn off the process of making human beings human. But not to worry. Don't most problems have a thirty-minute time slot solution?

- 6) The desensitization and the bypassing of emotional centers in the brain are unbefitting of a whole compassionate non-violent human being.
- 7) Television can interrupt the most important language lesson: conversations.
- 8) There are always more developmentally appropriate activities. The most common concern here lies in what children are NOT doing. We all honor the spark and drive in all children that leads them to play, experiment, create and make messes. That takes time – the kind of time that television devours. If television is abused, we spend our lives watching other people's adventures and ideas.
- 9) Media blunts the senses. When we consider the openness of children to all that happens, to their powers of absorption and selfless imitation, we can appreciate the vital part their senses play in this. Just as food nourishes the physical organism, so the experiences of touch, warmth, movement, sight, sound, taste, smell and well-being bring the world to the attention of the child. The exercise of the senses also nourishes the central nervous system and the brain, which enables the developing child to wake up into the world around them. Consider this anecdote of Martin Large's:

“Recently, I watched an eleven-year old boy spend a long time observing the movements of a field mouse in a hedge. He followed every movement intently, and was thrilled at what he saw. On another occasion, I was with a ten-year old boy, showing him one of Britain's wildest, most beautiful rivers which threads its way through the forests of the Welsh borders. Seeing a Peregrine falcon circling the vantage rock we were on, I asked a birdwatcher where the next was. He invited me to look through his powerful telescope at a pair of Peregrines who were nesting in a nearby cliff. The boy looked briefly through the telescope with little interest, hardly saw anything and was certainly not touched by the experience. He was a heavy viewer, with his own set, with access to videos and a home computer for games.”

10) A young child needs the world to be true, connected and alive. Piaget's studies show that before a child is six years old, every object that he/she encounters is considered alive and conscious. It is no wonder that the formative years are so impressionable. That is why Waldorf Kindergartens give to everything a living breath, a life of its own, so to speak. The opposite would be dry intellectualism, for example, stating the earth revolves around the sun and that is what makes day and night.

A more living picture would tell the child that Father Sun stretched out his arms and warmed the land with light to wake up the dear people and creatures --- and as he rose high in the sky, he sang with the birds. When it was time for all on Earth to go to sleep, he slid down the mountains so the stars could sing lullabies to the sleepy children.

Older children need the most scientific of facts, but in the early years, it is appropriate to keep cool abstract thinking waiting in line behind imagination and wonder.

Television feeds the child rigid, garish, indigestible images and concepts. Our children need bread not stones.

Majority of information taken from: Where are the Children? by Marie McClendon; Who's Bringing Them Up? by Martin Large; and Failure to Connect by Jane Healy

### School Programs and Hours

Blue Sky Kindergarten offers programs for children 2 1/2 - 6 years old:

- ❖ Star Group: Monday - Friday (4 or 5 days) 8:30-1:00
- ❖ Sun Group: Monday - Thursday (3 or 4 days) 8:30-12:50
- ❖ Afternoon School: Monday-Thursday 12:50/1:00-3:30  
(Please sign up as far in advance as possible. We only have twelve children per day.)

Many children attend these various preschool and kindergarten programs until they are ready for first grade.

## Rhythm of the School Day

8:30-8:50	Arrival
8:50-9:15	Walk
9:30-10:00	Circle
10:00-11:15	Play / Clean up
11:15-11:30	Hands washed /bathroom
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:35	Play outside
12:40-12:50 or 1:00	Story time / Goodbyes

## Rhythm of the School Year (See individual Class Calendars for details)

September 2015	All School Fall Environment Day
October	Harvest Festival
November	Lantern Walk Parent Conferences Thanksgiving break
December	Spiral Garden
December-January	Winter Break
February	2016-17 school year re-enrollment deadline
March	Spring Break
April	All School Spring Environment Day
May	May Day Celebration
June	Commencement Ceremony
June 2016	Summer Camp begins

## Signing In and Out

All children shall be under direct supervision of a responsible adult at all times. Each morning and afternoon, please sign your child in and out on the clipboard. Whoever brings or picks up a child is responsible for signing him/her in and out each day. This is a requirement for legal and insurance purposes. Staff will check these forms at a regular time each day and do a check to see each class has the appropriate number of children. Likewise, at pickup time, each teacher shall check the lists to make sure all children have been signed out.

It is imperative that families keep updating their files in the office for anyone who is going to pick up your child. Children will not be released unless we have written authorization. If someone comes to pick up your child that we do not know or is not on this list, we will not let your child go with them. It is our policy to ask for identification from persons who are not familiar to the staff.

Please write a note on the Sign In Sheet if your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself. Without this written permission, we cannot legally release your child to anyone else, even if they identify themselves. We appreciate parents picking up their children at or before 12:50/1:00 or 3:30. Please call the office (303-443-9098) or the After School emergency number (303-819-4784) and let us know if you are going to be late so we can let your child know. If you have not come or called by 15 minutes past pick up time, we shall call the numbers on your emergency release form to try and locate you or an approved person to come and pickup your child. After 12:50/1:00 or 3:30, a \$1.00 late fee is charged for each minute late. If your child is not picked up by 4:00, police will be notified.

## Parking

We are committed to limiting traffic around our school and preserving our relationship with our neighbors. Please carpool whenever possible. Otherwise, please park a block or so from the school and enjoy the short walk to school. If you need to park in front of the school, please:

1. Drive very, very slowly.
2. Park only in front of school and schoolyard.
3. Do not make U-turns on 11<sup>th</sup> Street.
4. Watch for walking families.

Thank you for your attention to everyone's safety.

### Arrival

School begins at 8:30 a.m. Arrival time ends at 8:50 a.m., when we set off on our walk or go inside for Morning Circle. If you come after 8:50, please wait with your child outside the classroom or in the Office until our morning circle or walk is finished. We will come and open the door for you in about 10-15 minutes.

### Appropriate Dress

We like children to get involved in what they are doing, sometimes this results in their clothing absorbing their projects. Although we provide smocks, this is often not enough to protect clothing. We feel the best policy is to have children wear clothes to school that are comfortable and that no one has to be overly concerned about getting dirty. No jewelry, please.

### Dress for the Weather

We believe in being outside in all kinds of weather. Please dress your children warmly in layers, with waterproof mittens, snow pants, and hats that cover their ears on snowy days. We will only come inside if it is excessively windy or the wind chill factor is extreme. On summery days, we spend half the day outside. Please sunscreen your children before coming to school; we will reapply as necessary. We use Neutrogena Sensitive Skin Sunblock Lotion.

We are fortunate to have an abundance of shade trees at our school. Children will be encouraged to play in the sand and out of the sun. We have the "water carrier" visit every hour to make sure each child is drinking enough water on hot summer days.

### Things to Bring

1. Extra clothes in a ziplock bag, to be put in your child's cubby bag. Please label with your child's name. Soiled, wet and muddy clothes will be put in a grocery bag on your child's hook. Please replenish your child's cubby bag with fresh clothes for the next day.
2. A pair of indoor slippers or slipper socks that are not too warm, that stay securely on their feet while they dance and play, and that have no cartoon characters on them. Children go through about two pairs a year.

3. Appropriate outdoor gear, i.e., rainboots, rainjackets, umbrellas, water proof mittens, etc. We play outside every day in all kinds of weather. Please label everything (jackets, hats, boots, mittens, etc). It is appalling the number of clothes left unclaimed at the end of the year.
4. Sun hats (labeled). Please apply sunblock on your child in the morning, if desired. We are happy to reapply per your instructions.

Every child has their own cubby in which to store their personal belongings. Please keep toys and money at home. Blue Sky is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### Snack

We provide a nutritious snack in the middle of your child's morning each day. If your child has a special diet, you will need to let us know and bring in a replacement snack for that day.

### Lunch

We provide lunch at 11:30 each day. Lunches may include items such as beans, rice and veggies; bread, sun butter, carrots and apples; pasta, cheese, broccoli and carrots; or soup and biscuits. On special "Picnic Days" children bring lunches from home. Please send a simple lunch in a basket with a cloth napkin, just like a picnic. A small piece of fruit, sandwich, burrito, bagel (no sweets please). Everything in your child's lunch should have containers that can be easily opened and closed. Please do not send yogurts, gogurts, or juice boxes.

### Dusty, Trusty and Nibbles - Class Gnomes

Dusty, Trusty and Nibbles will be coming to your home this year. At the beginning of the school year, we provide a list of the special days they are scheduled to visit you. The gnomes love to help our school by bringing some of the snack ingredients for the week. If for some reason you cannot take them on your scheduled day, please try to trade with another family. This service is greatly appreciated by everyone at Blue Sky. The children love to bring the gnomes home and show them around the house. If you ask, they will help you clean and dust! It is also a great way of creating an atmosphere of generosity. The gnomes will come in their special travel basket, with a blanket and pillow. They will also have a small shopping list. Please bring them back to school on Monday with the groceries. Thanks again to all of you for taking such good care of Dusty, Trusty and Nibbles.

## Potty Training

We recognize children in this age group are still working on their potty training skills. We ask that parents supply an extra change of cloths, diapers or pull ups if needed. We will support your child during this learning time. We have restrooms in each classroom and we will also offer reminders to use the restrooms throughout the day.

## Communication

In order to maximize your child's experience at Blue Sky, we find open and frequent communication between school and home is crucial. Newsletters come out at least once a month with information about the special events and celebrations that the whole family may participate in. The newsletters will also include songs that we are singing. These newsletters often contain important information, changes in schedules, great jokes... so please read them. Please keep us up-to-date with your email address, as we may also send information via email.

We schedule two official Parent/Teach Conferences each School year, one in November and another in February. These conferences allow the teachers to share observations about your child, to answer your questions and address your concerns, and gain a glimpse of your child's home life as well.

It can be difficult for parents and teachers to talk during drop-off or pick-up times, so if you have a concern or question, please whisper in our ear and we will call you that afternoon to discuss your concern or set up a time to do so.

## Parent Evenings

We offer a Parent Evening about once a month. The dates appear on the Calendar. On these nights, we share a little of our kindergarten world: the stories we're telling, songs, circle times, crafts and anecdotes from the children's play. We try to offer something artistic. We all need to use our hands creatively. The second part of the evening is devoted to family life, to a sharing and discussion of various child-related challenges. We always have a great time. See you there!

## Birthdays

Birthdays are eagerly anticipated. It is your child's chance to wear the Birthday Cape and create the Rainbow we all dance under to Birthday land. A simple story is told with your child's particular qualities in mind to celebrate their unique journey into this life.

Each class has its own traditions. The Teachers will be contacting you as your child's birthday approaches.

### Illness or Home Day

Please be sure to call the office (303-443-9098) by 8:30 a.m. if possible to let us know if your child won't be coming to school. For the health of us all, please keep your child home for at least 24 hours after the break of a fever. At this age, illness can come on very quickly. There is a special place in each classroom where your child can rest away from other children until you come to fetch them. Please keep us updated with all necessary contact information. We need to know what your child has come down with so we can alert other Parents about what to look for. Children with communicable diseases may be excluded from School for such a time as is prescribed by the child's physician or for a period of time designated by the local Health Department.

### School Closings

Blue Sky Kindergarten reserves the right to close school during bad weather. If the weather is questionable, listen to the radio or television for announcements or check our website. We close whenever Boulder Valley Public Schools cancel school. On other days in which the school needs to close, we will notify parents through a phone tree.

### Children will be supervised at all times!

The staff at Blue Sky takes attendance twice daily. Plus, a head count is taken every 15 minutes while we are outside. The staff monitors drop-off and pick-up times by checking the sign-in sheet and by taking attendance at the Aftercare program. In the event that a child wanders off, we will call the police and whatever emergency numbers that are in your child's file. The staff will search all the buildings and surrounding areas, and neighbors will be contacted as well.

In the event of an accident or other medical emergency, we will first dial 911 for help, then attempt to call the child's parents. If we cannot reach a parent, we will call the person(s) listed on the child's emergency contact form. We will then continue to try to reach parents. Please keep your emergency contact information updated and accurate at all times.

In the event that it is necessary to transport the child to Boulder Community Hospital or another medical facility before a parent or an emergency contact person arrives at the school, one of the teaching staff members will accompany the child with the emergency staff to the hospital and remain with him or her until a parent/guardian arrives.

An accident report will be completed by the staff of Blue Sky. A copy will also be sent to the parents. A first aid kit is located at the school in both kitchens, and in the barn. All lead teachers have First Aid and CPR Training.

### Medication

We will use the following guidelines from the Department of Social Services regarding medications.

1. All medications should be given to a teacher to be kept and dispensed.
2. Prescriptions may be dispensed at school providing we have written orders from a person with prescriptive authority on file, the instructions on the label are clear, the date is current, and Parents have given the School written permission.

### Fire Drills and Tornados

A fire drill will consist of the following:

1. Staff members shall contact the Fire Department and let them know we are having a Drill.
2. Staff members will contact the Alarm Company.
3. Children will be informed of the drill.
4. Alarm will go off.
5. Children in the blue house will line up at the door and follow their teacher out the front exit of the house. The teacher will take the sign-in sheet with her.
6. In the brick classroom children will line up at the door and follow their teacher out the door and into the alley. The teacher will take the sign-in sheet with her.
7. Other Staff members will check for anyone remaining in both buildings.
8. After checking both buildings, including bathrooms, those staff members shall meet their groups outside.
9. All groups shall wait outside until it is cleared that they may return to the classroom. Children will re-enter their houses.

In the event a fire is detected in a building or a fire alarm activates, the preceding emergency plan shall be implemented. Emergency plans are posted on all bulletin boards in every classroom. We have regularly scheduled Fire Drills and Tornado drills in each classroom. In addition, our staff is trained in the techniques and procedures for the careful consistent monitoring of children's whereabouts.

In the event of a Tornado alert, children and staff shall follow this procedure: If the children are outside when the siren is heard, we will gather the children and proceed inside the schoolhouses. The children will be asked to crawl under the tables and wait until the alert is over.

### Special Needs Children

Children with special needs shall have the opportunity to enroll at our School. The admission of a child with handicaps shall be encouraged when the Blue Sky staff has skill in the understanding and management of the needs of the child and when the child can be integrated into the group. We have a ramp at the blue house for children who need wheelchair accessibility. The brick house is also wheelchair accessible. In the event that a child with ADA comes to our school, we shall meet with the parents and the team of specialists that are working with the child to decide on proper placement and teaching techniques for that specific child.

We accept special needs children unless they threaten the safety of others, present an excessive financial burden, or through their needs or behavior impose conflict with the essential function of the school or program. As with all the children enrolling, The Director of the school will make a determination as to which class is appropriate for a child. If a child meets our general criteria for acceptance and there is room in either class, the child will be invited to register.

We accept children as young as two-and-a-half years of age. Even children who have mastered toileting at home can regress in the first months of School when all is new and there are so many wonderful distractions. Parents should bring plenty of changes of clothes and we will remind the children to go several times during the course of our day.

## Field Trips

A Blue Sky Field Trip generally occurs in the afternoon – after school when we all agree to meet up at the Pumpkin Farm or Apple Orchard. Parents transport and care for their own children. All parents must fill out a Field Trip Consent form for their child. If a parent cannot participate on the field trip, children may accompany other parents in their cars. Children who are under 55 pounds must have a car seat for traveling. Parents' permission is required for this special day. If a child arrives late for a field trip the parent must either stay with the child at the school until the class returns or take them to the field trip location. They must sign in the child in either situation.

## Reporting of Child Abuse

Like therapists, as childcare professionals, we are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Children are precious! If you believe that a child has been neglected or abused, we encourage you, also, to report it to Boulder County Social Services at 303-441-1240.

## Visiting

From time to time, we have students and parents who like to come to our school to help and to visit. The policy for this is as follows:

1. All visitors must call and make an appointment before coming to Blue Sky. Mindy is the only teacher to okay visits.
2. All visitors must sign in and out on the sign-in sheet every visit.
3. We shall have a limited number of visitors at our school per year. Parents need to meet with Mindy prior to the visit to understand our observation guidelines before their visit.

## Enrollment Process

So as to not disrupt the classrooms during the day, arrangements are made outside of school hours for general school visits and tours. The process for attending Blue Sky starts with families attending a Parent Open House. You may call the office for our Open House schedule. They are scheduled throughout the year. During the Open House you will have the opportunity to meet our teachers, and hear about our educational philosophy. A tour of our classrooms will be given as well as an opportunity to talk about the needs of your child.

If, after the Open House, you are interested in enrolling your child, we ask that you fill out our Application and return it with the \$50 application fee to the office. Once the applications have been collected and reviewed, you and your child will be invited to a playdate at Blue Sky Kindergarten. The playdate is typically a short 45-minute session where you and your child, as well as a few other perspective families, come to play with Mindy.

After all the playdates have taken place, the teachers will consider each child for acceptance into the school program. Upon acceptance, we will ask you to sign and return the Tuition Agreement, with your non-refundable deposit for your child to be officially enrolled. You will also receive a variety of forms to fill out (medical, immunization, field trip, etc); we ask that you return these forms as soon as possible to the office.

### **Itemized fees**

Application fee is \$50.00.

One Time Enrollment Fee is \$100 (for new families only)

Tuition for the 2015-16 School Year:

3-Day Program \$6500, 4-Day Program \$8300, and 5-Day Program \$9580.

Materials Fee for the 2015-16 School Year:

3-Day Program \$450, 4-Day Program \$500, and 5-Day Program \$550.

Afternoon School is optional and runs from 12:50/1:00-3:30 Monday-Thursday for \$25.00/day. You will be billed after the end of each month.

### **Summer Camp 2015**

All children enrolled in the Fall 2015-16 Program participate in at least one session of summer camp with their designated class; additional camp sessions are optional.

Camp schedule is: Monday-Thursday, 8:30am - 12:30pm (No Afternoon School)

Children bring a picnic lunch every day.

Dates and fees for Summer Camp are:

**Sun Group:**

Session #1: June 8<sup>th</sup> – June 25<sup>th</sup> (3 weeks: Mon-Thurs) - \$540

Session #2: July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 23<sup>rd</sup> (3 weeks: Mon-Thurs) - \$540

**Star Group:**

Session #1: June 8<sup>th</sup> – June 25<sup>th</sup> (3 weeks: Mon-Thurs) - \$540

Session #2: July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 23<sup>rd</sup> (3 weeks: Mon-Thurs) - \$540

**Withdrawal from Blue Sky**

On occasion, circumstances arise and Parents must withdraw their child from our school.

If your child must leave the school for any reason, our policy is as follows:

1. Since our mutual commitment was for one full school year, your family is still committed financially to our School until we find a replacement for your child's space. This will be accomplished with all possible speed.
2. A minimum of thirty days notice is requested.
3. The family will meet with the Director and close contract.
4. Communication is critical at this time to make the transition simple and easy for all the children involved. On the child's last day of school, the teacher will create a Good-bye Circle.
5. We cannot refund any money that has already been paid to the school.

Blue Sky also reserves the right to terminate a contract if it is in the best interest of the child and/or school. Families will continue to be financially responsible until we find a replacement for their child's space.

Welcome to our wonderful school. Please let us know what we can offer you and your family to make your stay at Blue Sky a happy one. Teachers can be reached at 303-443-9098.

A letter from Colorado Division of Child Care:

Dear Parent:

Your child was recently enrolled in a child care program that is licensed by the Colorado Dept. of Human Services. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a child care facility. If you have not done so, please ask to see the license.

Most licensed facilities make every effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for children. Unfortunately, on rare occasions, an incident of physical or sexual abuse may occur. If you believe that your child has been abused, you should seek immediate assistance from your county department of social services. The telephone number to report child abuse in your county is:

-Boulder Co. Dept. of Social Services, 3400 Broadway, Boulder CO 80304, 303-441-1240

Colorado requires that child care providers report all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Child care services play an important role in supporting families, and strong families are the basis of a thriving community. Your child's education, physical, emotional, and social development will be nurtured in a well planned and run program. Remember to observe the program regularly, especially regarding children's health and safety, equipment and play materials, and staff. For additional information regarding licensing, so if you have concerns about a child care facility, please consult:

-Colo. Div. of Child Care, 1575 Sherman St. 1st Fl., Denver CO 80203, 303-866-5958