

**Waldorf Early Childhood Parent  
Handbook  
Journey Charter School  
2015-2016**



"Receive the child in reverence,  
Educate the child in love,  
Let the child go forth in freedom."

Rudolf Steiner

## EXPLORATION OF ESSENTIAL CHILDHOOD NEEDS

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Food for thought is offered throughout this guide in response to "show me the research!"

## EXPLORATION OF ESSENTIAL CHILDHOOD NEEDS

**Welcome**

Welcome to the Early Childhood Program of Journey Charter School. We hope this handbook may serve as a bridge between home and school as we partner to nurture and support your child. We recognize that the important work you do at home, as a parent is your job. In this handbook, we explicitly offer ways in which you can support the Kindergarten program and your child's healthy development at home. Such advice may seem like an over extension of our authority as teachers, yet is offered in the spirit of partnership and collaboration, as we as we work together to create healthy environments in which the children can thrive. We thank you for prioritizing your time to learn more about the topics discussed in this guide. We welcome your questions, comments and concerns. Please read this handbook and keep it as a reference throughout the year.

With warmth and gratitude,  
The Early Childhood Teachers

Dandelion Kindergarten:

Morning Glory Kindergarten:

Snapdragon Kindergarten

Sunflower Kindergarten:

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Please also refer to the Journey School Handbook

<http://www.journeyschool.net/for-parents/school-policies/school-handbook/>

## EXPLORATION OF ESSENTIAL CHILDHOOD NEEDS

### **Philosophy**

Our kindergartens are based on an understanding of child development in which the child between birth and age seven develops and learns through imitation. Young children are open to every impression in their environment, absorbing the world through their senses and responding in the most active mode of knowing - imitation.

We strive to create a beautiful home-like environment worthy of imitation: a protected childhood space where the imagination and creativity of the child will flourish and where their inherent capacities are nurtured.



Just as a child lives in a rhythmical life of waking and sleeping, we also work with a regular rhythm for our daily and weekly activities including: creative play using simple wooden toys and basic play materials, music and verse accompanied by movement and gesture, nature stories and fairy tales, practical activities of gardening, baking, sewing, washing and folding, artistic activities of coloring and painting, and spending time in nature. Allowing the children's imaginations and creativity to develop in kindergarten creates a foundation for academics and a lifelong love of learning.

<http://www.journeyschool.net/education/curriculum/kindergarten/>

### **Preparing for the First Day**

#### **Meet & Greet Visit**

These brief visits will be held in our classrooms on the days prior to the first day of school. Your child will see the indoor and outdoor classrooms, and may bring their change of clothing and mug. Parents will have a chance to ask questions of their child's teacher. Teachers will have the opportunity to meet each child individually and make a personal connection with them.

#### **First Day of School:**

**Wednesday, September 9, 2015: 8:40 am - 12:10 pm (early release day)**

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**Kindergarten Hours:**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 8:40 am - 12:40 pm

Wednesday: 8:40 am - 12:10 pm (early release day)

- Please be prompt for arrival and pick up. Thank you.

**What to Bring:** (may bring to the Meet & Greet visit)

- A *full change of clothing* in a cloth bag, all labeled with your child's first and last names. Your child should always have a seasonably appropriate change of clothes available at school, including socks and underwear. *Please check regularly.*
- *Mugs: small ceramic, plain (check with your child's teacher)*

*Helpful Hint: If your child is feeling anxious about going to school, a suggestion might be to tell your child a simple bedtime story for three nights in a row, before school begins. The story could be about a little animal that lives in the forest and is getting ready to go to school. Create a story that is relevant to your child; for example, choose an animal your child is most like: Is he slow and steady like a turtle or more like a rabbit who hops from place to place, or like a horse that flies with the wind? Integrate your own personal life into the story - (e.g., if you have a younger baby at home, tell how the little rabbit will hop out of his den and leave the baby rabbit at home in his nest and how the rabbit will hop off to school to meet all his new friends). Tell about all the things the little rabbit will do at school - play with friends, paint, color, sew, cook, bake, go for walks, hear stories and have birthday celebrations.*

*Helpful Hint: On the first day of school, we recommend a quick good-bye to ease the transition. Show confidence in your child's ability to make this transition successfully. If you have questions or concerns, please speak with your child's teacher directly.*

**Life at Home**

As your child enters school we ask you to consider and prioritize: sleep, nutrition, limited media, living arts and social development. Understanding

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and supporting these will ease your child's transition to school and give your



your child a gift for life.

### **Living Arts**

Much learning takes place when children are invited to participate in practical and domestic activities: folding clothes, setting the table, cleaning, meal preparation, laundry, pet care, gardening, sewing, sweeping, and woodwork. We encourage you to invite your child to work by your side at this young age to lay the foundation for healthy habits and independent chores.

### **Media Guidelines**

Most parents are drawn to our school because of our unique pedagogy, philosophy and shared values. The philosophy of Journey School is based upon an understanding of the developing child. While television and other media can serve as a source of information and entertainment for adults, children do not operate in the same developmental stage as adults. External, artificial images inhibit the viewer's inner picture making ability, which limits the developing capacity for our thoughts and imagination. Developing this capacity is the cornerstone of Waldorf education. The nature of electronic light, swiftness of images, and the quality of sound of television, computers and videos can adversely affect the healthy development of the child. Recent research, including that of the American Academy of Pediatrics, on the effects of exposure to electronic media cites resulting learning and behavioral disorders, sleep disturbances and physiological damage.

Research also shows that exposure to media entertainment for young children may have a detrimental effect upon their self- image, their ability to concentrate and develop attention span, their relationship skills, values, reading skills, physical skills, energy levels, psychological health, creativity and social behavior.

Because we believe that the impact of the electronic media can have detrimental effects on a child's healthy growth and development, we encourage families to incorporate our media free philosophy into their children's daily lives. We realize that limiting or eliminating media from your child's life might feel like a tall order. However, with support and

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reassurance, families may find that more free time means more creative and quality time together. Additionally, we educate our parents about issues that stem from media exposure and [offer alternatives to media](#) and encourage real, candid, open, and nonjudgmental conversations between parents and teachers regarding media.

[http://www.familysafemedia.com/alternatives\\_to\\_tv\\_handbook.html](http://www.familysafemedia.com/alternatives_to_tv_handbook.html)

### **Journey School Media Policy:**

<http://www.journeyschool.net/for-parents/school-policies/media-policy/>

We expect that our families **significantly reduce or eliminate media use in all its forms** (television, videos, video games, computer games, phone apps, I-pods, CD players, radio, movies, etc.) for their children.

- We ask for **complete elimination of electronic media during the school week**, from **Sunday evening to Friday after school**, for grades K-5.
- In the Kindergarten, Saturday morning television fare, adult-oriented programming, and PG rated and above programming are strongly discouraged.

The over stimulating influence of media upon young children is visible in the kindergarten in many ways. The child may speak in the tone of a certain character or machine where speech can be reduced to the sound of robots or mechanical noises. The child may seem "stuck" in creative play, unable to play anything but a super hero or transformer. Other children seem to lose their imagination and can't "think" of anything to play (not even house). Subtle changes may be noted in a child who cannot sit still during a story making it a distressing time instead of a time of wonderment and delight. Developing the child's capacity to imagine and create an inner picture in their mind when hearing a story is the cornerstone of Waldorf education. This inner picture making capacity is a prerequisite to a child's academic development. It takes more effort for a child to generate his/her own images than to bring up external, artificial images offered by media. For example, the image of Batman will always override the self-generated image of character in a beautiful fairytale because media images are so overwhelming.

We are committed to nurture, protect and provide young children with a learning environment that enables them to be creative and imaginative individuals and we ask for your support and partnership in this endeavor.

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### Food for thought (click the links):

Early Television Exposure and Subsequent Attention Problems in Children

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/113/4/708.abstract>

Children and TV: Limiting your child's screen time

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/childrens-health/in-depth/children-and-tv/art-20047952>

The Immediate Impact of Different Types of Television on Young Children's Executive Function

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2011/09/08/peds.2010-1919.abstract>

Media Use and Child Sleep:

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/128/1/29.full?sid=54c2632d-21de-465f-b0c8-060680aff920>

Video Games Can Activate the Brain's Pleasure Circuits

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-compass-pleasure/201110/video-games-can-activate-the-brains-pleasure-circuits-0>

The Effects of Video Games on Children's Brain

<http://www.wakingtimes.com/2014/03/28/effects-video-games-childrens-brains/>

### **Nutrition**

"Breakfast like a giant, lunch like a gnome, and dinner like a fairy". A breakfast with some protein stabilizes blood sugar and energy levels. Sugary breakfasts cause the body to release too much insulin, followed by a blood sugar drop; the result is an overactive, emotionally out of balance child, who may struggle to pay attention and learn. We also encourage sitting with your child during breakfast time and sharing a meal together.

### **Journey School Nutritional Guidelines:**

<http://www.journeyschool.net/for-parents/school-policies/nutritional-guidelines/>

### Food for thought (click the links):

Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15883552>

The effects of breakfast on behavior and academic performance in children and adolescents

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3737458/>

*Helpful Hint: Healthy options include, oatmeal with milk, nuts and dried fruit, scrambled egg burritos, whole grain toast with cottage cheese, or a fruit smoothie made with yogurt or nut butters. It is important to not overwhelm young children by asking them to choose between meal selections (especially in the morning). A rhythm for breakfast offerings that simplifies the morning might be: M, W, F: Oatmeal with milk, nuts and fruit/ T, TH: egg burritos.*

### **RECOMMENDED**

- Whole grains
- Good proteins (nuts, seeds, eggs, cheese/yogurt, turkey sausage)
- Organic, fresh fruits and vegetables
- Essential fatty acids (omegas). Some of the food sources of w-3 and w-6 fatty acids are fish and shellfish, flax seed (linseed), hemp seed,



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soy oil, canola (rapeseed) oil, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, leafy vegetables, and walnuts.

### AVOID

- Hydrogenated oils
- Preservatives & dyes
- White sugar, corn syrup
- Processed or fast food
- Juice (which spikes blood sugar)

### Sleep/Bedtimes

Young growing children need 11 to 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep every night. Please create consistently early bedtimes;

**we recommend 7pm to 7 am.** Early bedtimes go hand-in-hand with early meal times. Having a consistent bedtime ritual (one story, a song/verse, a candle) helps to get young children to bed on time with a feeling of security. Often the pre-bedtime routine (bath time, pajamas, teeth brushing etc.) can drag on.

*Helpful Hint: Consider establishing a pre-bedtime. For example, pajama time at 6:00 - 6:30, bedtime at 7:00, depending on your family's routine. Please encourage and maintain regular early bedtimes, 7:30 PM at the very latest.*

### Food for thought (click the links):

[Sleep and children](#)

<http://sleepfoundation.org/sleeptopics/childrenandsleep>

Elementary students' sleep habits and teacher observations of sleep related problems.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2005.tb00010.x/abstract>

Mild sleep restriction affects cognitive functioning in young children. Evidence from brain recordings

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23862635>

The role of sleep in brain development

<http://phys.org/news185947540.html>

Characteristics of toddlers with and without behavioral sleep problems (Doctoral dissertation)

<http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/dissertations/AAI3468103/>

Changes in children's sleep duration on food intake, weight, and leptin

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24190680>

### Social Development

Cooperative, imaginative group experiences that focus on the joy of movement meets the physical, emotional cognitive and social needs of young children. **We request that you postpone involvement in competitive and/or organized sports or performance oriented activities**, as they awaken a competitive spirit and a self-consciousness in young children that is better delayed to a later stage of development.

### Food for thought (click the links):

[Children and sports: Finding a healthy balance](#)

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<http://www.goldenvalleycharterschool.com/sites/default/files/ChildrenandSports.pdf>

Children and team sports:

<http://www.movementforchildhood.com/uploads/2/1/6/7/21671438/teams.pdf>

Are competitive sports bad for kids?

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/211670-are-competitive-sports-bad-for-kids/>

*Helpful Hint: During the school week, provide a quiet afternoon of play, time in nature and helping activities (tidying up rooms, laundry, pet care, dinner preparation). Give time to rest from a busy morning and to process story*



*images.*

### Life at School

Activities: Daily and Weekly Rhythms

#### Daily Rhythm (example)

- **Arrival/greeting**
- **Transition:** inside shoes
- **Circle:** songs/verses/movement and gestures
- **Creative play/activity:** painting, baking/drawing/  
snack prep./crafts
- **Clean Up/Wash hands**
- **Snack**
- **Outdoor Play**
- **Rest time**
- **Story:** puppets & dramatic play
- **Closing Verse/Dismissal**

#### Weekly Rhythm (example)

Monday - Nature Walk/Popcorn, fruit

Tuesday - Rice/Painting

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Wednesday - Soup/Vegetable Cutting/Bread Baking

Thursday - Oatmeal/Sewing & finger knitting

Friday - Millet/Coloring

\*Your child's class may offer slight variations to their daily and weekly

**Arrival**

The morning greeting and opening circle form integral parts of the day. Tardiness breaks this special early morning routine for children and does not allow them needed time to transition from the drive to school to integrating with their classmates. For your child's sake and that of the class, *please arrive at least 5 minutes early, by 8:35.*

Your child's teacher will let you know where it is best to wait. Loud behavior and running are discouraged, as we wish to begin the morning in an atmosphere of calm and peace. Please remain with your child until the teacher opens the door and greets your child at 8:40 am. Teachers are not able to receive the children prior to that time.

Please initial next to your child's name on the class sign-in sheet. If your child is staying for after care, please leave his/her lunch in the basket outside the classroom.

*Helpful Hint: We suggest that you bring your child to school between 8:30 and 8:40 a.m. Morning drop off presents a valuable time for parents to meet with one another, and perhaps arrange for play times outside of school.*

**Dismissal**

For dismissal, please park and walk to meet your child outside the kindergarten at 12:40 p.m (12:10 on Wednesdays). Your child eagerly looks forward to seeing you, and it gives him/her a wonderful, secure feeling when you are on time at the end of their school day. You are also teaching your child good habits of timeliness.

You will be called if your child is not picked up by 12:50 (12:20 on Wednesday). Prompt pick up is required as your child's teacher has obligations after the kindergarten hours.

If someone other than the parent picks up your child, please make certain his or her name is listed on the release form in the office, and please inform the teacher with a written note in the note basket.

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If there is a day when you need to pick your child up before the class release time, please let your child's teacher know that morning. Sign your child out in the office before picking up early.

### **Cell Phone Use on Campus**

In alignment with our shared core value of providing a media free environment at school, we ask that **there be no cell phone use (talking, text messaging, responding to email, etc) on campus at arrival and dismissal times.** Please allow this important transition time and your full attention to be devoted to being with your child at the beginning and end of his/her school day.

We also request **that adult volunteers refrain from cell phone use in the outdoor classroom and on nature walks**, and move out of sight and hearing from the children if an emergency call/text needs to be taken. We thank you for your support as we strive to create a reverent space for the children, free from the distractions and over stimulation of our modern world.

### **Attendance, Tardiness and Absences**

Daily attendance is important for the young child as it helps to build a strong rhythm and demonstrates the importance of school. Further, regular attendance supports your child's social development and the unity of the class. When a student is absent, school funding is reduced by approximately \$40 per day, regardless of the reason for the absence. State funding based on attendance is vital to our school's operating budget and fiscal health. We ask that you schedule family vacations to coincide with school vacations such as Winter or Spring Breaks, and that doctor appointments be scheduled for after school.

Punctuality: When adults have a good relationship with punctuality and attendance, then our children will learn reliability and respect for others. Consistent punctuality strengthens the will of both adults and children. For this reason, our school maintains a consistent daily rhythm for the children. The beginning of the school day establishes the mood for the day, with activities such as movement, speech and music, which bring the class together and prepare the children for work. All the students say a morning verse together. It is important that your child is present for these activities and it is equally important that latecomers not interrupt the class. *Helpful Hint: Please feel free to bring your child to school 5 - 10 minutes early to greet classmates and play outside before kindergarten begins officially at 8:40 a.m.*

Attendance is taken first thing in the morning.

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If your child should arrive late for school, *please check in at the office and then bring your child to the kindergarten class.*

If you find timeliness a challenge, please speak with your child's teacher for assistance with strategies to support being on time.

**If a child must be absent, notify the school office by 9:30 a.m.**

**Absent line: (949) 448-7232.**

<http://www.journeyschool.net/for-parents/school-policies/attendance-and-timeliness/>

### Health and Illness

We strive to provide an environment that promotes healthy activity for your child. We ask that children not attend school if they have:

- A temperature above 100 degrees, colored nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhea, or persistent cough.
- A contagious disease: chicken pox, strep, measles, impetigo, pin worms, conjunctivitis, or lice, etc.
- If they are not feeling well enough to fully participate in activities at school, as the lively kindergarten is not a soothing environment for a sick or recovering child.
- Your child should remain home at least **24 hours after they are free of fever** without the use of fever-reducing medications (like acetaminophen or ibuprofen)

### Allergies and Dietary Concerns

After providing the office with pertinent allergy information (on the student's Emergency Forms and school records), please provide written information regarding allergies and medications to the teacher by Back to School Night.

If your child is allergic to certain foods that we serve, such as wheat/gluten or dairy, you may provide an alternate bread or birthday treat, which we will store in the freezer. Please clearly label the treats with your child's first and last name.

### After-Care Program for Kindergarten

Little Acorns serves the kindergarten families of our school community by offering quality, age-appropriate care, consistent with the principles of Waldorf education. Please visit the School Website for aftercare information.

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<http://www.journeyschool.net/education/after-school-programs/>

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are very special in the Kindergarten. The teachers regard your child's presence in the kindergarten as a blessing and are grateful for the opportunity to express our appreciation on his or her birthday. Each teacher has a slightly different way of honoring your child at this time. Your child's teacher will contact you several weeks in advance to discuss details. To preserve the reverence for the celebration and allow all to "live in the moment," we ask that no recording devices be used during the event (cameras, cell phones, video recordings, etc.) You may take pictures at the end of the celebration.

When giving invitations for a birthday party outside of school, unless the whole class is invited, we ask that you mail invitations to individual children to avoid hurt feelings. Children are very sensitive about being included in birthday parties.

### **Clothing, Shoes and Warmth**

*\*Please label all clothing and gear with first and last name, especially outer layers*

We will be outside every day, rain and shine! It is wonderful to observe and interact with Mother Nature in all types of weather. Keeping the young child's body warm with clothing is essential for their health and well being. Before the age of 7, children may not sense their need for warmth and will need an adults support dressing in layers which may be removed as the day grows warmer.

We recommend 4 layers:

- 1) Undershirt, leggings under skirts/dresses
- 2) Long sleeved shirts/dresses
- 3) Sweater or sweatshirt
- 4) Jacket or Raincoat

In the Kindergarten we strive to model and inspire the children to work and play without distractions, so they are free to develop their imaginations. Because we strive to provide as beautiful and as tranquil an environment as possible, please refrain from sending your child to school wearing clothing with images and words including sports jerseys and camouflage clothing.

YES:

- Sturdy, simple clothes for active play
- Plain, solid colored or striped shirts and blouses.

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- Layers for comfort inside and outside
- Natural fibers (hemp, cotton, ramie, wool, cashmere) for comfort and ability to breathe
- Closed-toed, sturdy shoes that fit securely and that the children can put on by themselves. *Include socks.*
- Leggings or shorts under skirts/dresses, allowing for full range of movement and to provide warmth and coverage
- For Nature Walk day: dress your child in lightweight long pants and closed toed comfortable shoes. Please apply sunscreen to exposed skin
- For Winter: Rain boots and rain coat with hood ~ we play outside daily, rain and shine (no umbrellas)

Please, NO:

- Spaghetti straps or backless blouses or dresses
- Shoes that are open-toed, have heels or lights (no crocs)
- Shirts with writing, graphics, TV/media characters/images, sports logos or camouflage
- Wristwatches and jewelry
- Temporary tattoos and nail polish

We have a small supply of extra clothing for the children to borrow as the need arises.

Please check the lost and found periodically for lost clothes. Clothing left in the lost and found is donated to charity each season.

Look for the announcement in the school newsletter, the 'Thursday Know'.

<http://www.journeyschool.net/for-parents/school-policies/dress-code/>

### **Nutrition/Snack in the Kindergarten**

Food is one of the best ways we have to direct the health, behavior and moods of our young children. Every day the children help prepare a wholesome and hearty snack of various grains (rice, oats, millet/quinoa, wheat bread, popcorn), fresh, organic fruits or vegetables, cheese and nuts/seeds. The meal is shared at our table with a blessing and table manners. Please notify your teacher if your child has any food allergies or restrictions.

### **Seasonal Celebrations**

Celebration of the seasons lies at the heart of the kindergarten. Our celebrations focus on nature's changing processes. The children learn songs and verses chosen for that time of year, make seasonal crafts and bake special treats. Stories nurture a pictorial understanding of nature's processes and speak deeply to the children without our need to explain.

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Each classroom has a nature table that offers a way for the children to note the seasonal changes taking place outdoors. Children love the items adorning the nature table, and often bring flowers or stones that they have found to add to what the teacher has provided for the season.



<http://www.journeyschool.net/for-parents/event-calendar/>

*Helpful Hint: Offer your child a small table or windowsill to create his or her own nature table at home with natural items gathered from walks or outings. It is wonderful to share a nature story with your child of an experience you remember from your own childhood, highlighting a particular season. Share the colors, smells, sounds and activities that you remember, e.g. a trip to the ocean or tide pools, harvesting apples in the fall, a trip to the snow, planting a garden. Share your personal experience through the eyes of a young child.*

### **Separation Anxiety**

As the children begin the school year, and possibly the new experience of school, some children may experience difficulty separating from parents at arrival time. Please know that we are here to support this important transition. Each child will approach goodbyes uniquely. Some handle the separation fairly well, some show signs of distress and settle down shortly, and others are extremely upset with parting. It can vary with the child's age, her ability to deal with change in general, and with stresses in her life outside of school.

*Helpful Hint:*

- 1) Demonstrate trust and confidence in the teacher and in the decision you have made on your child's behalf. Your child's teacher is experienced helping families with this transition and offering a safe, nurturing experience for your child.*
- 2) Make partings brief. A quick goodbye and departure is recommended. Prolonging the parting prolongs the adjustment and the accompanying crying or tantrums.*
- 3) Assure your child that you will return, and leave her with a hug and a confident smile.*



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### **Toys From Home**

Please have your child keep his or her own toys and other personal belongings at home. Sometimes toys, books, jewelry, stickers, marbles or small items like to hide in pockets and come to school. We find that these personal items distract children at school. Please work with your child to make sure that these items stay safely at home or in the car. If a toy does come to school, we have the toy "rest" in the kitchen and then go home at the end of the day. Likewise, the school toys should remain at school. If a classroom toy does travel home in a pocket, please know that we welcome its return to the classroom where it can be available to play with all of the children.

Sharing: Sometimes the children like to bring something to show the class. In this case, the child can check with the teacher (we recommend something home-made or found in nature to share).

### **Parent/ Teacher Communication**

It is essential for the healthy development and care of your child that parents and teachers communicate directly and effectively. **We strive to be a team and encourage you to come directly to us with your question and concerns.** While teachers are not able to have extensive conversations before the school bell rings, we are happy to arrange a time to give you our full attention. It is through working together that we can best meet the needs of you and your child.

### **Food for thought (click the links):**

*A longitudinal assessment of teacher perceptions of parent involvement in children's education and school performance*

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

*A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

In November, we will have an opportunity to meet and discuss your child's class experience and share observations, impressions, questions and goals in order to deepen our shared understanding of your child, as well as strengthen our work together. We are always grateful for communication from you about significant changes or circumstances in your child's life. You do not need to wait until conferences to discuss your child. Please make an appointment any time it is needed.

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### **Kindergarten Parent Meetings**

A series of parent meetings are scheduled throughout the year for parents only. An important part of your school experience, these offerings provides parents with the opportunity to learn more about Waldorf education while strengthening our community of parents and teachers. **It is essential that at least one parent per family attend these meetings.** Your child's teacher will inform you of the dates.

### **Parent Volunteers/Adult Etiquette**

Thank you for giving your time and sharing your presence with our classes! Parent participation in the life of the school takes many different forms and is essential to the school's success. Whether supporting the class on Nature Walk Day, the garden, or a committee, parent volunteers provide a much needed and valued assistance.

We would like to offer a few guidelines for your visit to insure the optimum environment is created for the children. Our goal is to be present for the children and to create a space for them to fully live in their imaginations.

- **Movement:** the young child is looking for movements and gestures to imitate, be it sewing, cutting vegetables or setting the table. Let us pay attention to our posture and demonstrate gestures that are meaningful and beautiful. To accomplish this, usually means we only need to slow down. Even our breathing will become deeper.
- **Speech:** Statements are preferred over questions. Words are spoken simply and with care. It is pleasant to work quietly, perhaps humming softly.
- **Dress:** an apron shows we are there to work. (We do have extra aprons to share). Because they can be distracting for the young child, please minimize perfume, cosmetics and jewelry to your comfort level~ we thank you for your support.

For volunteer handbook and application forms:

<http://www.journeyschool.net/wp-content/uploads/Journey-Volunteer-Policy-.pdf>

[www.journeyschool.net/wp-content/uploads/five-points-of-parent-participation.pdf](http://www.journeyschool.net/wp-content/uploads/five-points-of-parent-participation.pdf)

<http://journeyschoolpc.net>

### **Discipline for the Young Child**

Kindergarten children, like all human beings, exhibit a wide variety of skills and challenges. In the Waldorf kindergarten, teachers guide behavior in a gentle, non-threatening, yet effective manner. We carefully structure the environment and daily rhythm. When disruptions or conflicts occur, we use

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creative images, characters, stories, and humor to re-direct play, regroup children in their play, and give them a special role involving their cooperation. Positivity and encouragement is always the best path in response to behavior challenges of young children. In general the Waldorf Early Childhood teacher provides guidance by modeling appropriate behavior with the children and with other adults. Positive redirection often works in areas where modeling does not. Much of the communication between teacher and student happens publicly, in front of the other children, so they all receive the same message. In cases of "bullying", the teacher works with all the students involved. The teacher may work with parents to create consistency between home and school. Time-outs are generally not given. Sometimes children just need to be held in the rocking chair for a bit or rest until they feel "like they are not so tired and can find their warm and gentle hands."

Children will be sent home for incidences involving physical aggression such as biting, hitting, kicking or severe tantrums. If your child is having difficulty with aggressive behaviors, please confer with your teacher before an incident occurs to establish consistent methods of discipline both at home and at school.

*"The young child instinctively expects guidance. Without the certainty of his parents and teachers he loses his security. Constantly being asked what he wants creates bewilderment in his mind. Instead we must develop consciousness and consciously meet the child's paramount needs. They are easily stated: security and an awareness of growth, love and a certain amount of protection. The conscientious and conscious parent will have to play an active and positive role in the education, the leading forth of his child. Lead the child by conveying firmness permeated with love."*  
 ~ Margret Meyerkort, internationally respected kindergarten educator

If your child is having difficulty with aggressive behaviors, please confer with your child's teacher before an incident occurs to establish consistent methods of discipline both at home and at school.

### **First Grade Readiness**

Our school policy considering first grade placement is that **a child must turn six years old by June 1st to be considered for first grade** in September of that year. Our program allows for differences in development, and we will have junior children become senior children (or star children turn to sun children) in our two-year program. It is important to know that this is not considered "retention", but a developmental program. We recognize that children do not develop and mature at the same rate. A child's chronological

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age and/or academic readiness are not enough to determine first grade readiness. We look at four major developmental areas as we near the end of the school year: gross motor development, fine motor development, and social/emotional behavior. If there is a question as to a particular child's readiness for first grade that may be chronologically ready, further assessment will be recommended. The assessment of the children is shared between the kindergarten faculty, Educational Directors and Administration. The teachers will meet with a child's parents to decide the best placement for the child following the assessment. Children enrolled in kindergarten at Journey School have first priority for admission to first grade the following year.

### **Learning More About Waldorf Education**

Parents and educators alike regard children with wonder and interest. What is the true nature of the child? The wisdom of experience through the body of literature on child development and Waldorf education can help us come to a clearer understanding of our children. There is a wealth of pertinent books available through various bookstores

<http://astore.amazon.com/jourschostor-20> and small publishing companies, to which one of the teachers would be happy to direct you. Additionally, the Kindergarten has parent meetings and events throughout the year during which the teachers will share aspects of child development and Waldorf education.

### **Organizations & Online Resources**

<http://www.journeyschool.net/journey-school-parent-university/>

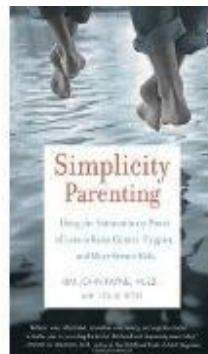
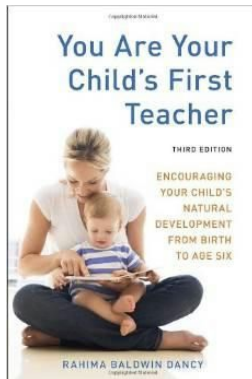
<http://www.whywaldorfworks.org>

<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/>

<http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/>

<http://www.waldorflibrary.org/>

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**Recommended Parent Readings:**

<http://www.journeyschool.net/about/journey-school-store-the-oak-and-the-acorn/>

Simplicity Parenting - Kim John Payne  
You are Your Child's First Teacher - Rahima Baldwin Dancy  
Understanding Waldorf Education- Jack Petrash  
Seven Times the Sun - Shea Darian  
Endangered Minds - Jane Healy  
Your Child's Growing Mind - Jane Healy  
Failure to Connect - Jane Healy  
Over the Rainbow Bridge - Patterson & Bradley  
Your Five Year Old - Louise Bates Ames  
Your Six Year Old - Louise Bates Ames  
Your Seven Year Old - Louise Bates Ames  
Raising Boys - Steve Biddulph and Paul Stanish  
Parenting Well in a Media Age - Gloria DeGaetano  
Positive Discipline - Jane Nelson  
Waldorf Education, A Family Guide - Fenner and Rivers

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**10 Essential Needs for a Healthy Childhood and Educational Experience**

- 1) **Proper Nutrition** - Growing bodies need a substantial, hot and nutritious breakfast every day before school. Breakfast, snack and lunch should contain protein, and no sugar or food additives.
  - 2) **Adequate Sleep** - Bedtime no later than 7:30 PM on school nights. Most young children need 11 - 12 hours of sleep each night.
  - 3) **Eliminate Media** - No computer, phone apps, TV, video games or other screens Sundays through Thursday. No murder, mayhem or adult movies or videos on the weekend, ever.
  - 4) **Quiet Time** - Provide daily quiet time, without radio, CDs or tapes. Give your child the gift of silence.
  - 5) **Time in Nature** - Spend time in nature every day. Experience the weather; pay attention to the season, moon, stars and sky.
  - 6) **Chores at Home** - Assign responsibilities for taking care of the home, pets and yard.
  - 7) **Appropriate Dress** - Pay attention to keeping your child warm and dry while at school, especially their feet. Our indoor space is kept at ~70° F, but we spend over an hour outdoors every day, so please plan your child's layers accordingly.
  - 8) **Cultivate Reverence** - All spiritual traditions offer practices that help develop the reverence for life that supports home, school and community relationships. If need be, create your own.
  - 9) **Support your Child's Education** - Help develop healthy rhythms, participate in school activities, and communicate honestly about your concerns with your child's teachers.
  - 10) **Support the Class Community** - Children need shared values and alignment among their adult role models. Get to school on time. Plan vacations during breaks. Support the class code of conduct.
- <http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/>

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**Gift Ideas for Young Children**

<http://www.journeyschool.net/about/journey-school-store-the-oak-and-the-acorn/>

**A Tool Box or Belt-** with small hand tools, nails, drill, hammer & screwdriver,

**A Basket of Wood Scraps**

**A Hand Made Doll-** cradle, simple bedding can be made from scrap fabric,

**A Basket with Material & Yarn-** felt, wool fleece, cotton & wool yarn, fabric scraps

**Art & Craft Material-** drawing paper, crayons, scissors, beeswax, clay & paints

**A Treasure Sack-** with marbles, crystals, "fairy tears", polished stones, acorns & shells

**Gardening Tools-** seeds, trowel, rake & shovel

**Fabric-** silk, cotton, gauze of various sizes for dress ups and plays

**China Tea Set, Wooden Bowls, Spoons-**(check thrift stores)

**An Apron-** for working or dress up

**Dress Ups-** hats, crowns, capes & silk scarves

**A Kite**

**Rope-** for jumping, tug of war, practice tying or "Cat's Cradle"

**A Kinder Harp/ Lyre**



"Waldorf Education places the development of the individual child in the focal point, convinced that the healthy individual is a prerequisite for a healthy society."

~□ *The International Conference on Education of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Cultural Organization*