

Parent Handbook



Welcome to Mud Pies Preschool! We are so happy that you have chosen our program for your child's preschool years. We created this handbook because we believe it is incredibly important to create a strong home-school connection. Communication is key to making your child's experience happy and healthy. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns, whether it be in person, by phone, or email (contact info on p. 4).

Values

- Safety
- Play
- Service

Vision

- The children lead.
- We make the world a better place.



VISION & VALUES

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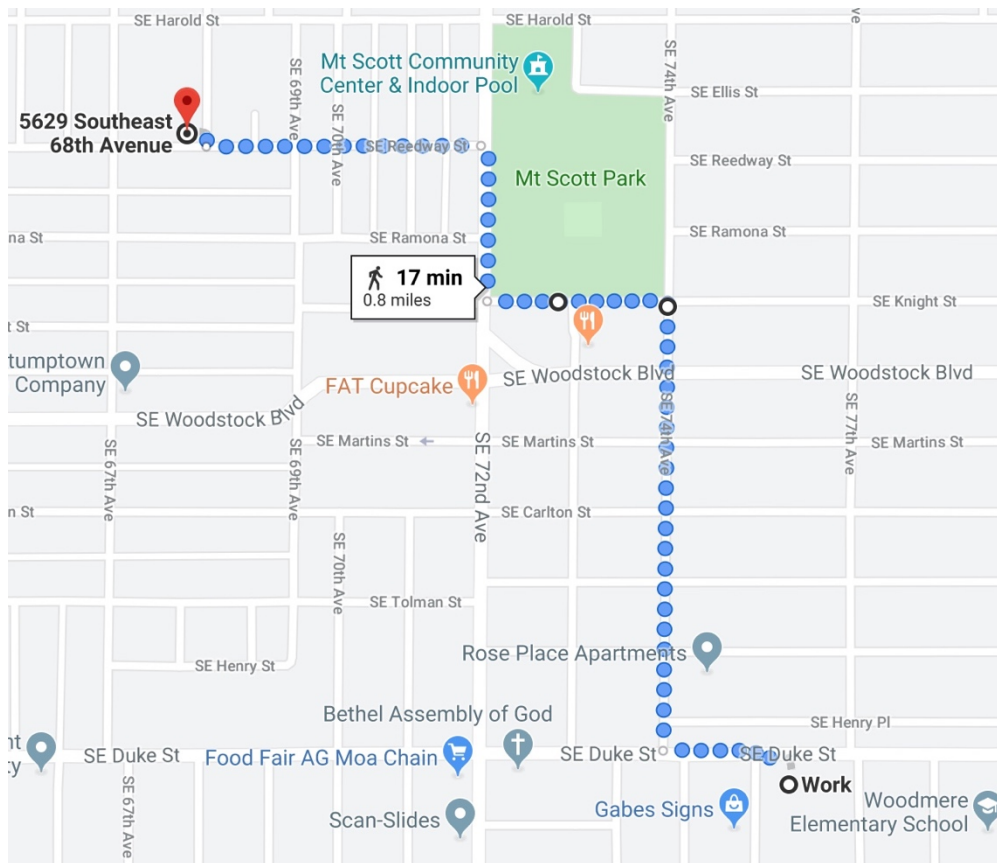
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Contact Information Including Emergency Map

School Location	7618 SE Duke St. Portland OR 97206
School Phone/Email	(971) 666-3599 info@mudpiespreschool.com
Kai Hernandez, Director	[REDACTED] director@mudpiespreschool.com
Meredith Sorensen, Owner & Accounting	(908) 601-3905 meredith@mudpiespreschool.com
Gene Wixson, Owner & Maintenance	(503) 333-7286 wixson@mac.com
Facebook	(Secret Facebook group by invitation)

Emergency Location: Meredith and Gene's Home
5629 SE 68th Ave
Portland OR 97206

→ Go four blocks west of Mt. Scott Park. We're on the NW corner of SE 68th and Reedway, between Woodstock Blvd and Harold St.



**We are even more committed than ever to cultivating a culture of safety and emergency preparedness within the Mud Pies Preschool community. What that looks like continues to evolve. We suggest printing this page of the handbook and putting it in your glovebox of your vehicle.*

Overview

Mud Pies Preschool provides a play-based, developmentally appropriate learning community for children ages 2-5. We are licensed as a certified family childcare home operating in southeast Portland.

Program Philosophy

At Mud Pies Preschool, we are committed to modeling respectful communication, building close, trusting relationships with individual children, and nurturing the whole child through play-based learning experiences. We operate on the understanding that children develop at their own unique rate and follow their natural instincts to learn about the world (themselves and others) through play. We actively choose not to provide formal lessons—instead emphasizing play, exploration, and social-emotional learning.

We offer a full day of play-based preschool for children. Since opening this program in 2019, our focus has been on creating a safe space that allows children the freedom to explore their natural interests, build relationships, and develop a sense of belonging. **In our program the children are the curriculum (taken from Bev Bos).** Children’s time is spent meeting their own needs through play, while our staff is committed to developing strong, authentic relationships with each one of them. We strive daily to create an environment that allows children the time, space, and materials needed to support each of their individual needs in development. Our caregivers work diligently to develop personal relationships with each child in our program, trusting each child as a competent individual with unique needs and emotions.

Throughout our days, we prioritize play and exploration in the outdoors. We believe children learn about the world through their senses, and need optimal time outside to develop a strong mind, a strong body, and a strong connection with nature. Rain, wind, sunshine, and the occasional snow are included as part of our daily experience.

Mud Pies Preschool is licensed by the Oregon Office of Child Care. We operate as a state-certified family childcare home. Our license is always posted for families to view. All additional required postings are posted on the bulletin board near the front door.

Application and Enrollment Process

If you are reading this – the Parent Handbook – it means you have already made it through most of the following steps. We are including this section, the Application and Enrollment Process, to provide context for onboarding children and families.

The first part of joining the Mud Pies Preschool community includes the following:

- **Touring:** ideally the parent(s) and child
- **Applying:** includes a simple 2-page application and application fee
- **Fitting the Schedule:** we try to match our availability to the household’s needs.
- **Enrolling:** Lock the spot in with the following:
 - Child Care Enrollment Agreement

- Personal and Medical Information and Authorization
- Emergency Medical Consent
- Food Program Enrollment
- Photo Release
- Current Immunization Record (from your pediatrician)
 - If delaying or skipping vaccines, we require the Vaccine Education Module Certificate, available here: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/preventionwellness/vaccinesimmunization/gettingimmunized/pages/non-medical-exemption.aspx>
- (Optional) Completed ASQ developmental screening, available at www.asqoregon.com
- Enrollment Fee

Once we have received all required paperwork and payment(s), we will create a Procure account for your child. If your child's start date is many months in the future, we will likely wait to create an account until a few weeks prior to the start of care.) Parents will receive a PIN via email, which they can use to sign their child in and out of the program. We also send monthly invoices via Procure and allow you to make future tuition payments electronically, if you choose. Statements (both monthly and year-end) are available through Procure as well (remember this for tax season!).

The final part includes:

- **Getting Ready.** We double check paperwork and prepare cubbies and bedding. You get your kiddo ready. See <https://www.mudpiespreschool.com/guide-for-childs-first-days-at-preschool>
- **Game On!** We're so glad you're here.



Daily Communication

Upon enrollment, we will send you a private Facebook group invite for your child's school, where you'll be able to view photos and daily updates. Many of our families visit the site daily, and you'll be able to get a very enjoyable "sneak peak" into your child's day, their interactions with teachers and children, and even make connections with other families in your child's school community. We often post articles and resources we feel our families would enjoy. We also often send an update via Procure on your child's day including meals and naps.

Training and Professional Development

Highly trained staff is one of our priorities. All staff maintain current Infant / Child CPR and first aid certifications, as well as a food handler's card and the other "safety set" trainings. All adults in and around the home are enrolled in the Oregon Criminal Background Registry (CBR) system. We work with staff to support their goals.

Staffing

We staff our preschool program with one lead teacher and one or more assistant teachers, with a group size of 16.* This ensures that children experience stable and consistent caregivers. Our staff-child ratio is normally 1:8 or less. If a substitute provider is needed, we make every effort to ensure that they have had an opportunity to visit the program and meet the children beforehand.

Daily Rhythm

7:30 AM	Program opens
8:45 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Free play (indoor/outdoor)
11:30 AM	Lunch
12:00-1:00	Free play (outdoors)
1:00-3:00	Rest or quiet activity
3:30 PM	Snack Free play (indoor/outdoor)
5:30 PM	Program closes

What to Bring

Be sure to send your child in play-friendly clothing. Loose, comfortable clothing is best for play. Shoes should be easy to run in with closed toes. We believe it is important for children to practice putting on and taking off their own shoes. For this reason, please do not send shoes with laces, buckles, or anything else that may hinder their independence. We play outside every day, rain or shine, and as the saying goes, "There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing." We ask that all families keep a few complete weather-appropriate changes of clothing in their child's cubby, plus any seasonal clothing/gear needs (examples: rain boots and light gloves for much of the year, hat for summer months). Play can be messy business and no one is comfortable in wet clothing. We also encourage children to bring a small blanket or stuffed animal along, especially for comfort at nap time. If you can send along a family photo, many children enjoy sharing them with the group, and it can be a comfort to them. *Please do not leave diaper rash cream, sunblock, or medications in your child's cubby.* We have a lock box stored out the children's reach for these items.



Supporting Children Through Transitions

Drop off and pick up times can often be one of the most difficult transitions for young children. We offer the following tips to help families support their child during transitions:

- **Talk with your child about how you plan to say goodbye and when you will return.** Agree to a goodbye routine which you and your child can both count on each day. Some parents choose to read one book, or give a special handshake and hug. Often waving

goodbye at the window can be comforting.

- **Make sure that your family's morning routine is predictable.** Staying longer when your child is upset can often prolong the child's sadness about separating. We find that it is best to keep drop-offs and pick-ups short and sweet, while remaining calm and confident. ("I am going to give you one more hug and kiss and then I am going to work. I will be back after your nap" seems to work well).
- **Do your best to be calm and confident about your child's day.** A calm and confident demeanor will allow your child to feel more at ease about saying good-bye. Our teachers will make an effort to stay in touch over the first few days, and we can often text you a photo and update after drop-off. The Facebook group also helps parents feel connected and in touch with what their child is doing each day.
- **Don't distract, sneak off, or discount your child's strong emotions.** No matter how upsetting it might be to confront your child's sadness, take the time to say goodbye. It is not helpful to point out who or what your child can play with when they are upset. Goodbyes can be sad, and we work very hard to support that reality for children. Teachers aim to step in to support your child through the transition. Please come talk to us for ideas about making your child's drop-offs and pick-ups easier.
- **Please be aware that your child may be highly emotional at pick-up time. This is a very common occurrence in young children called "after-school restraint collapse."** You are your child's safe person, and after a long and busy day, they may let it all out in your presence. Another reality is that your child may not always be immediately ready to go home at the end of the day. Try not to take either reaction as a personal affront. Allowing children to finish what they are doing is the most respectful approach; however, if your child is running throughout our school during pick-up, please assist them in gathering their things and transitioning home. *Our teachers have spent long days meeting the needs of multiple children, please be courteous.* The teachers will also help you with this transition, if needed.
- **Even after your child has become used to their routine, life changes** (developmental steps, a new sibling, new house, illness, etc.) can cause them to have a rough time at transitions again. Do your very best to be calm and supportive through these moments. It is also helpful to communicate any life changes your child may be experiencing to teachers, so they know how to best support your child at school.
- **Looking for more resources?** We highly recommend Janet Lansbury's articles and podcasts on respectful caregiving for young children. Visit www.janetlansbury.com

Our Approach

We believe strongly that a constructivist approach to preschool learning is key to early childhood education. In our program, the children are the curriculum (taken from Bev Bos). As research has shown, authentic and meaningful learning happens through play. Children are born experimenting and exploring. Every experience a child chooses has a value and a part in their learning. Only when an experience is relevant, shared, hands-on, and meaningful to a child will it take hold and become part of their understanding. We draw from many resources.

However, ***our most important resource is the children themselves***. The teachers' role is to support their play with necessary supplies, relationships, and guidance in any direction their play leads. We follow their interests and build upon them; and we modify the environment to help support learning.

Daily activities are based on children's individual needs and interests. This may include but is not limited to:

- **Literacy:** Working with letters, reading books, retelling stories, writing with different tools, writing notes to express thoughts and emotions
- **Math:** counting, numeral awareness, one-to-one correspondence, sorting and classifying work, building with shapes, measuring, comparing, ordering, pairing
- **Art:** crayons, markers, oil pastels, markers, washable paints, assorted papers, watercolor paints, glitter, beads, string, yarn, recycled materials, clay, play dough, glue sticks, school glue, stickers, colored tapes, scissors, pencils, colored pencils
- **Tools for building fine motor skills:** tongs, scoops, measuring cups, all sorts of blocks, puzzles, sorting activities, writing and art activities
- **Dramatic/Pretend play:** dress-up clothing, real-life props, fort building
- **Music and movement:** musical instruments, singing songs, dance parties
- **Gross motor skills:** hula hoops, tricycles, balls, shovels, large dump trucks, gym mats, play structure
- **Science and the natural world:** learning about animals and insects, growing plants, exploring with magnifying glasses, nature collections (rocks, shells, feathers, pine cones, seeds), mixing and chemistry
- **Sensory activities:** scooping and pouring, sensory boxes (kinetic sand, flax seed, dried corn, water, cooked pasta), color mixing, exploring new scents, mixing our own play dough and other messy mixtures

Disabilities

We do not discriminate against disabled children. We welcome all children into our program as long as we can fully meet their individual needs within the group setting. Close communication and collaboration is key to providing high quality care for all children, and this is especially true for disabled children. We must be able to meet each child's needs within our group setting.

One tool we can use is a screening tool, the ASQ3/ASQ-SE that teachers can complete within 30 days of your child's enrollment in the program in order to give us information we can use to support each child's development. If we identify developmental areas of concern, we will ask that you complete an ASQ as well, and we will work together to set goals and seek resources. If we feel that a child needs an evaluation for extra help, we will make that recommendation to you, and offer you any community resources and referrals available. If your child currently has identified special needs, we will work together prior to enrollment to determine what accommodations we can make to provide the care your child needs, and collaborate with you and any other service providers to support your child's needs and development. In rare cases, it may become necessary to find alternative care for a child, normally only in situations which

threaten child or staff safety. In that case, we will work hard to offer you any assistance we can to find new childcare arrangements.

Assessment

As children progress in the program, we keep notes and photographs throughout our days, so that we are aware of the children's physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive development. With regular observation and interaction, we are able to have a clear picture of your child's overall development. Not only is this important to each child's growth and school readiness, it allows us to plan activities to meet individual needs as well as the group's learning opportunities. We are able to uncover what is working and what needs improved or adapted. Every six months to one year, we can provide a detailed developmental update on individual children. We can provide information on each child's overall development, areas of growth, skills currently being worked on, note any passions or areas of interest, and communicate any other relevant information about your child's development.

Kindergarten Readiness

There are many skills we would like the children to master before they head to kindergarten. Most importantly, we want them to exit our program as confident, joyful learners. Above all else, the social skills that come from being part of a group are what will aid them in being successful learners in kindergarten and beyond. We work hard to communicate with you throughout your child's enrollment on particular skills we are working with your child to develop, as well as any possible areas of development or behavior that concern us, and we welcome your input about the things you notice at home. If needed, many helpful resources are available through local agencies, and often with just a bit of help early on, a child can work through a skill or area that is challenging to him or her. Here is a list of the "kindergarten readiness" skills we feel are important goals:

- Listens to stories
- Pays attention for short periods of time to adult-directed tasks
- Understands actions have causes and effects
- Shows understanding of general times of the day
- Cuts with scissors
- Beginning to share with others
- Starting to follow rules
- Manages bathroom needs
- Buttons shirts, pants, coats, and zips up zippers
- Speaks understandably
- Talks in complete sentences of five to six words
- Looks at pictures and then tells stories
- Identifies some alphabet letters
- Sorts similar objects by color, size, and shape
- Recognizes groups of one, two, three, four, and five objects
- Counts to ten

~Adapted from the "Kindergarten Readiness Checklist" by Peggy Glsler, Ed.S. And Marge Eberts, Ed. S

Lending Library

We allow children to borrow books from our library.* Our books are shared by all of the preschool families, so please remember to: borrow one book at a time, return books promptly, and fix/replace any damaged books. A sign-out system is located by the front door.

**For the 2021-2022 year we are not allowing children to borrow books. Apologies!*

Discipline

We do not believe in punishment or time-out. While this approach is gentle and flexible, we believe that any limits we set for the children must be simple and consistent. We always prefer to honor the children's right to solve their own problems with minimal intervention from adults. When intervention is necessary, children are encouraged to use their own voice (with support or adult presence) to speak out to their own behalf in the situation. When adult intervention is required, teachers may say something like, "I hear them saying they do not like that. I won't let you hit them." When a situation requires greater intervention, we will help the child move somewhere else where they can play safely, and always communicating with the child calmly when we are helping them. "It's too hard for you to keep ___ safe while you are playing right now. I am going to help you find a place where you can play safe."

- Our ultimate goal is to make sure our program is a safe place for all. We don't allow hurtful behavior to persist, whether it be physical: hitting, pushing, biting; or emotional: pushing other's boundaries, or name-calling. We are constantly working to create a safe space for all children.
- We adhere to state regulations regarding discipline of the children in our program. We believe that children are just beginning to learn limits, and our job as parents and teachers is to help them find appropriate boundaries. This doesn't mean that they won't stumble, or that we as adults will always have the perfect solution. But often, there can be some simple solutions to what is happening. Perhaps they are tired, hungry, stressed out, or just need some extra attention. We do not call it "time-out"...we truly want the child to get their needs met, and "time out" is often creating the opposite result. We do not want to push away children when they need us most. Often "time-in" would be more appropriate explanation for what a child truly needs in the most difficult moments. We will often sit closely with or hold a child when they are upset. Writing notes often helps, too.

Conflict Resolution

At Mud Pies Preschool, conflict resolution is a daily part of our curriculum. Spontaneous free play provides countless chances to encounter problems. Free play lets children interact with

one another and practice resolving conflicts firsthand. We utilize Heather Shumaker's approach to conflict resolution.

Ten Steps of Conflict Mediation with Kids

1. **Help kids stop:** Point out what you observe. Interpret words & body language. Ask questions. ("Stop. What's happening?" "I see you putting your hands up." "Do you want that child to throw dirt at you?")
2. **Bring kids together:** Kids need to be close enough to see and hear each other. Get down at kid level. Touch, listen and look into their eyes. Support both kids. (Give each child the opportunity to answer "What happened?" Say, "You need to listen to ____.")
3. **Identify feelings:** Empathize. Show you understand each child's feelings. Be matter-of-fact. ("You feel mad they took your stick." "Are you feeling mad because you want this stick and someone else is using it?" "You didn't like that. You wish you could have this stick.")
4. **Tell the right person**—direct confrontation: Help kids face each other and speak directly to the other child. Give children exact words. Stay with them as they talk. ("Tell them: 'I don't like it when you throw dirt at me.'")
5. **Listen to peers:** Put the children in charge. Make sure each child knows they have to listen to the other child. Guide and support kids in this process. ("When someone says 'Stop,' you have to stop.")
6. **Define the problem:** Help kids be specific about limits. State what the child does not like. Restate it in the child's own words. ("I hear you saying 'Stop.' What do you want them to stop doing?" "____ says they didn't like it when you threw dirt at them.")
7. **Reinforce:** Echo what the kids say. Echoing reinforces the message and makes it louder. Intervene, if necessary, to help a child stop or listen.
8. **Problem solve:** Ask, "What could you do to solve this problem?" Help kids define limits and set them on other kids. ("If you want to throw dirt, where can you throw it without it hitting ____?" "____ says you can throw dirt nearby, as long as it doesn't get in their face.")
9. **Get a commitment:** Ask kids for a verbal agreement. ("You both agreed that ____ can use this stick now. Does that work for you?" (asking all children involved)
10. **Put a solution into action:** Try the children's solution first. Problem solve again and try a new idea if it doesn't work.

If a certain behavior or issue has become a concern, we will pause play, sit down with the children to come up with solutions. This approach works well, as it places responsibility on the children to consider how their behavior impacts others, and the rules are easier to follow because they have been the ones with the power to choose them. Here are a few of our favorite "guidance" resources:

- *It's OK NOT to Share and Other Renegade Rules for Raising Competent and Compassionate Kids*, by Heather Shumaker
- *No Bad Kids: Toddler Discipline Without Shame*, by Janet Lansbury

- *Elevating Child Care: A Guide to Respectful Parenting*, by Janet Lansbury
- *Becoming the Parent You Want to Be*, by Laura Davis
- *Unconditional Parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishments*, by Alfie Kohn
- *Parenting from the Inside Out: How a Deeper Self-Understanding Can Help You Raise Children Who Thrive*, by Daniel Siegel
- *The Whole -Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child 's Developing Mind*, by Daniel Siegel

Adult-Child Interactions

Teachers at Mud Pies support preschoolers in their cognitive, language, and emotional growth through honest, respectful dialogue and conversation. We view children as competent, authentic individuals with their own developmental strengths, as well as challenges. We work closely with children to support their inquiry and curiosity through naturally-occurring interactions, between adult-child as well as with their peers. We view the largest part of our work as the support and scaffolding of preschoolers' emerging social and emotional development. Conflict resolution is a natural and integral part of our curriculum, and we acknowledge, support, and empathize with the sometimes stormy seas of early childhood. Sometimes a child just needs time and individual attention to get themselves back under control. Remember too, that the range of ages we care for (24 months to 6 years) have a wide range of development. Everything that is wonderful about a mixed-age group can also be challenging behavior-wise. We always do our best to work with each child and their parents to support each child's needs and development.

Biting Policy

Biting can be, unfortunately, a developmentally "normal," yet unsafe behavior up to age three, and sometimes beyond, depending upon individual development. We do our very best to keep all children safe, and this can be a behavior that is extremely upsetting for everyone involved. We work hard to help children through this difficult behavior, and find ways to help them develop the language and coping skills which will work to curtail biting. Parents often ask if we "expel" children for biting. Rarely does biting become that much of an issue, and we always do our best to support children through what is normally a passing phase. In the case of biting or other physically harmful behavior that cannot be managed or curtailed within our environment, we will work with the family and the child to seek out solutions. We reserve the right to terminate care if all other avenues have been exhausted, and the safety of the other children is at stake.

Clothing/Supplies

Remember that we offer a play-based program. Play is messy stuff. Your child will be busy running, painting, working with clay, digging in the sand, pouring water, and so much more. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothing.

Also, keep multiple changes of clothing (including sunhat during warm months, socks, underwear if needed) in your child's cubby. Labeling clothing (especially socks) with your child's

name or initials is extremely helpful to teachers so that we can help keep track of children's belongings.

We go outside just about every day, short of high winds or extreme weather, so please send outerwear and footwear that is weather-appropriate. Footwear needs to be something that the child can independently (or with minimal help) put on/take off. We recommend, if possible, that you bring a pair of rain boots to keep at school so that your child can comfortably play outside, even on wet days. We have a collection of full rain suits which we use occasionally in the rainy months.

Please also supply your child with a dishwasher-safe water bottle. It can be stored at school and will be washed/sanitized daily.

Finally, please remember that diaper rash cream, sunblock, or medications should not be stored in your child's cubby. We have a lock box stored out the children's reach for these items. We do supply (and apply) sunblock with written permission from parents; but we do not supply diaper cream nor medications.

Toys from Home

All children are welcome to bring a security object from home for rest time. **When possible, please keep other toys at home or in the car.** While some children are able to successfully manage keeping the toy in their cubby, more often than not, these become an issue between children, or may become lost or broken. Toys that are small enough to be choking hazards will not be allowed. We strive to have a wide variety of toys for the children to play with each day. We do not generally allow children to carry blankets, bottles, sippy cups, food, pacifiers, or other personal items throughout the house because cups and pacifiers get "shared," blankets get tripped on, food gets dropped, and children generally don't enjoy sharing their toys with the group. We will work with a child if they find the group setting a difficult adjustment at first, with the goal of helping children feel comfortable enough to begin storing their security objects in their cubby, where they can be readily available for rest time, and safely stored during play and activity times.

Parent Participation

We always* welcome parents' participation and support of our program, and appreciate any ideas or help you can offer. The children always enjoy having someone new to read them a story or sing them a song, if you have a moment in the morning or evening to sit down with them. If you have recyclable materials (example: paper, magazines for collage, envelopes, stickers, tape, baby food jars, holiday cards, old calendars) we can always make quick use of these items. If you'd like to bring snacks or treats for a special occasion, or even "just because," you are more than welcome to arrange that with the teachers. Treats from home need to be store-bought or pre-packaged and sealed, due to health department regulations or potential allergies among the group. One idea that works well for birthday treats is to send a cake mix

and frosting; the children then love helping to make their own cupcakes for their birthday party with friends.*

**During this unsure time, we limit extra adult interaction, and making food with the kids isn't an option.*

Flashlight Nights

Two to three times per year we typically* host flashlight nights at our preschool from 6:00-9:00pm. In general, these occur on Friday nights with a maximum of ten spaces available. The child gets dropped off with a flashlight, jammies and a toothbrush. We serve the children dinner (pizza and veggies) and glowing fun ensues.

**This year might not be typical.*



Potluck and Clothing Swap Events

In general, two to three times per year we host a potluck and clothing exchange.* This is typically an 11am—1pm event on a weekend day at the school. It allows families and staff to get to know each other outside of drop-off and pick-up. Participants bring a nut-free dish to share, and participation is completely voluntary.

**Again, this year might not be typical. At the time of editing, potlucks feel unlikely.*



Diapers & Diaper Cream

We supply disposable diapers and unscented wipes. If you prefer a specific brand or alternative method of diapering, you are welcome to bring a supply from home. We support cloth diapering but do not provide them. Due to licensing requirements, any soaking or other treatment of soiled cloth diapers will need to be done by you at home. If your child needs diaper rash cream applied, you will need to sign a medication permission form and supply a tube of diaper rash cream, labeled with your child's name. *Please do not leave diaper rash cream in your child's cubby for the safety of all children in our program.*

Outdoor Play & Physical Activity

Knowing how important physical activity is for healthy bodies and minds, we play outside on a daily basis, regardless of weather. Only during extreme temperatures, high winds, or poor air quality do we avoid outdoor play. On the rare occasion during which we are stuck inside, we supply gross motor activities to ensure children are able to remain physically active: balance beam, obstacle courses, and music and movement. During naturally-occurring opportunities, we will discuss with children how physical activity makes them feel. Do you feel your heart

beating fast? Are you sweating? We talk about powerful bodies, how practice at something makes your body stronger, and how playing hard keeps you from getting sick.

Toilet Training

Although you may be anxious to be rid of diapers and ready for your child to be toilet trained, there are definite signs that will show you when your child is both physically and emotionally ready to start this process. Attempting to toilet train before your child is ready will only cause frustration for everyone concerned and may actually delay the process. Look for these signs and when your child is exhibiting most or all of these signs, he or she is ready to start toilet training:

- Staying dry for a 2-hour period during waking hours;
- Waking up dry after naps;
- Able to pull down pants and underwear and pull them up again when done;
- Telling you just before going to the bathroom in his/her diaper;
- Is comfortable sitting on the toilet and willingly does so for 1-2 minutes;
- Requests new diaper immediately after wetting or soiling diaper;
- Has regular/comfortable bowel movements;
- Is cooperative when asked to do tasks; and
- Follows directions willingly.

If your child is not exhibiting most or all of these signs, he/she may not be physically or emotionally ready to begin the toilet training process. We watch for these signs in every child. Once your child is ready we will start working with them to try sitting on the toilet, as you work at home on the same process. Once that process is successful, we will switch to disposable training pants instead of diapers. These are not used until the child is ready to be toilet trained we want them to consider these to be 'underwear', not a diaper. Once your child has successfully gone a few weeks without accidents wearing these, we will ask for the transition to underwear be made. Always dress your child in comfortable clothing which is easy for them to manage. We highly recommend loose elastic waist pants or shorts for this period of time, so that they can feel successful and confident about toileting. Bring lots of extra pants and underwear (and socks — socks are often a casualty of potty accidents!) so that the teachers can easily help your child change into dry clothes if there is an accident. Teachers will work to remind your child to use the toilet throughout the day, but often the group setting can be a bit more busy and distracting to a child who is engrossed in play and activities with friends, so accidents do happen. We will send wet or soiled clothing home in a plastic bag. Please be sure to check your child's cubby at the end of each day.

Please remember that each child is an individual with different developmental stages and personalities. Siblings may be ready earlier or later than other children. It is common for children to be toilet trained any time between the ages of two and four, with the majority making the transition to underwear around or just after their third birthday. When your child is truly ready, emotionally and physically it will be an easy transition for them to make. One of our favorite articles on the subject of respectful potty training comes from Janet Lansbury.

<http://www.Janetlansbur.v.com/S014/08/5-reasons-kids-dontneed-toilet-training-and-what-to-do-instead/>

Parking

There is street parking available at Mud Pies Preschool. Please be courteous and do not block our neighbors' driveways or cause unsafe conditions for other parents, children or neighbors. Use caution when pulling up or driving away, as we all know that young children can move quickly and be unpredictable. *Please be sure that our front gate is closed every time you enter and leave the premises.*

****Please be sure to park at least 10 feet from any garbage cans on the curb (this mostly applies to Tuesday morning drop off's).**

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on the premises for the health and safety of child care children as well as in adherence to state child care regulations. Please refrain from smoking on our property.

Termination of Enrollment

In the event of a necessary termination of care, you must submit a minimum of 30 days of written notice. You have the option to "pay out" part or all of the notice if you prefer, instead of continuing care. If you do not give the required notice, you will be held legally liable for the amount remaining unpaid of the required notice. We will not refund any pre-paid tuition, regardless of length of notice.

Nondiscrimination Policy

We are an anti-bias and inclusive program, and we warmly welcome children of all abilities and families of every race, religion, and family composition. We will not discriminate based on any religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation, creed, color, national origin, marital status, age, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or use of a trained guide dog or service animal of any child or family member. All types of families are represented in the things we see, do, read, and hear. We welcome and encourage diversity so we may learn from it.

Confidentiality

We respect your right to privacy. We will not share any confidential information among other families without your permission or consent unless mandated by childcare licensing regulations, other statutes, or by a court of law (see Mandatory Reporting). We are obligated to protect children's privacy, which includes withholding the names of children who may have been involved in incidents which occur in the program.

Hand Washing

We practice regular hand washing. Much research has shown that regular hand washing is one of the most effective ways to lower the incidence of colds, flus, and other illnesses in childcare. We have the expectation that staff and children wash hands (at bare minimum!)

- Upon arrival in child care (during drop-off please escort your child to the sinks to wash their hands if they require assistance);
- After bathroom use;
- Before and after eating and cooking activities;
- After playing outside;
- After any contact with pets (not applicable in our current setting); and
- After wiping faces, blowing noses, etc.



Disinfecting and Sanitizing

As required by state childcare regulations, we clean and disinfect toys and equipment with a sanitizing bleach solution weekly and as needed*. We clean the bathroom throughout the day with disinfecting bleach solution. Dishes are washed either in the dishwasher or in a 3-part wash with sanitizing rinse solution. Bedding is individual to the child, and is stored separate from other children's bedding, and we wash it weekly.

*Under our emergency regulations we clean and sanitize much more frequently.

Emergency Plan

In the event of a disaster that could pose a health hazard:

1. If it is determined it is safer to evacuate, children will be taken to a place of safety. A note will be placed on the front door to advise parents where the children have been taken. We will take along our emergency bag (includes first aid supplies, water, snacks, contact numbers, etc.)

Our planned evacuation site is
Gene and Meredith's home
5629 SE 68th Ave, Portland, OR 97206

→ 4 blocks west of Mt. Scott Park at the corner of 68th and Reedway (see p. 4)

2. Parents will be contacted by cell once children are safe.
3. We will remain with the children until it is either safe to return, or the child's guardian has picked him/her up. If we return to Mud Pies Preschool, parents will be contacted. In the event that we lose power we may remain open. If it isn't safe (too cold without heat,



or power isn't likely to be turned back on in a timely fashion), we will notify parents and ask them to pick up their children.

We stock emergency supplies on the back porch of the school. We aim to ask households to update their child's personal emergency kit (a change of clothes, a note, and a non-perishable comfort item) during each daylight savings time event (e.g. the fall and spring).

Emergency Drills

Fire drills are practiced at least once a month. Smoke detectors are checked monthly. Fire extinguishers are checked annually. We have a fire and safety drill record posted.

Hours of Operation

Mud Pies Preschool operates from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday. See our current holiday closures list for upcoming closures (the "Calendar" page on the website).

Tuition and Fees

You pay tuition to hold the space in our program for your child. Tuition will not be reduced for illness, holiday closures, inclement weather closures, family vacation, or lack of attendance. We follow Portland Public School's inclement weather closures, in order to ensure the safety of children and staff. Tuition is due by the 20th of the month prior to service. Tuition is considered late beyond the 25th, and late fees incur per day after the 25th. Tuition can be paid by cash (put inside a labeled envelope into the locked tuition box), check (payable to Mud Pies Preschool LLC), and online (ACH/debit/credit payment options are available through Procure). Some payment types through Procure carry an additional fee. If tuition is not paid by the 1st of the month, care may be terminated.

In the event of a returned check, you will be responsible for any fees my bank charges and there will be a \$25 returned check fee. Checks can be dropped in the tuition box and will be entered into ProCare.

Late Pick-Ups

Late fees will be charged for pick-ups beyond our operating hours (7:30 am to 5:30 pm). See fees at <https://www.mudpiespreschool.com/tuition>.

Please contact us as soon as possible if you realize you are running late to pick up your child. The children often feel anxious when their parent doesn't arrive as expected. If a child has not been picked up or we have been unable to get in touch with you, we will begin calling those people listed in your paperwork as authorized to pick up your child. We understand the unpredictability of Portland traffic; however, we reserve the right to terminate care if late pick-ups become a regular occurrence.

Schedule Changes

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Any permanent schedule change requires ~~30~~ days written notice, and are dependent upon availability. If you need a temporary change (to switch days on a certain week, or for a short period of time), we will attempt to accommodate your needs, but are often unable to due to limitations of group size and ratios.

ProCare & Receipts

- We use a child care management app called ProCare (www.procaresoftware.com). Our attendance is handled within a secure online system that assigns each parent/guardian a PIN to use to sign their child in and out of their school. Teachers can guide families through this process.
- We send out a monthly invoice/reminder for tuition each month (around 15th of the month). You have a few options for payment. Procare offers an online payment option via bank account or credit/debit card (a transaction fee applies to both options, and credit/debit cards also incur at a fee). If you pay by check/cash, we ask that you leave your tuition check in the locked tuition box inside the school. We will enter your payment into your account online once we collect checks. You'll be able to access your account balance and receive receipts via email. Once you sign up and create an account at www.procaresoftware.com, you can also access statements and payment receipts yourself. ProCare also offers a parent app for iOS and Android; please download this app.
- Procare also allows us to post important reminders/messages for you to receive via email and at sign-in/pick up, such as upcoming events and closures. Be sure to include your preferred email address(es) when you complete your child's paperwork.
- You can print a receipt or statement for tax purposes within www.ProCareSoftware.com or through their parent app. Our TIN#, which you may need for claiming tuition payments on your taxes, is 83-2994673.

Sick/Cold Policy

As we all know, illness is a given with young children. We do our very best to accommodate the realities of runny noses and the mild colds that come up in the lives of small children. However, we can't allow serious illnesses to spread within the group. We must exclude any **children with a fever of 100 degrees or more; more than one incidence of diarrhea; any incidence of vomiting; unusual yellow color to skin; severe cough; wheezing or difficult breathing; skin or eye lesions; severe rash; or complaints of severe pain** [source: Office of Child Care, Certified Family Child Care Regulations, January 2015]. We will contact you to pick up a child if symptoms appear mid-day, and we ask that you pick up within 30 minutes. You must keep your child out of care until fever-free ***without the help of over-the-counter medications*** and/or until it has been 24 hours since first dose of antibiotics, last incident of vomiting or diarrhea, and/or until other severe symptoms have passed. We must reserve the right to make the final decision as to when a child can return to care and/or request a doctor's note confirming that your child can indeed safely return to child care without unnecessary risk to them or others in the group.

Please contact us when you are planning to keep your child home sick, so we know not to expect him or her.

Sick/Cold Policy



If your child has...

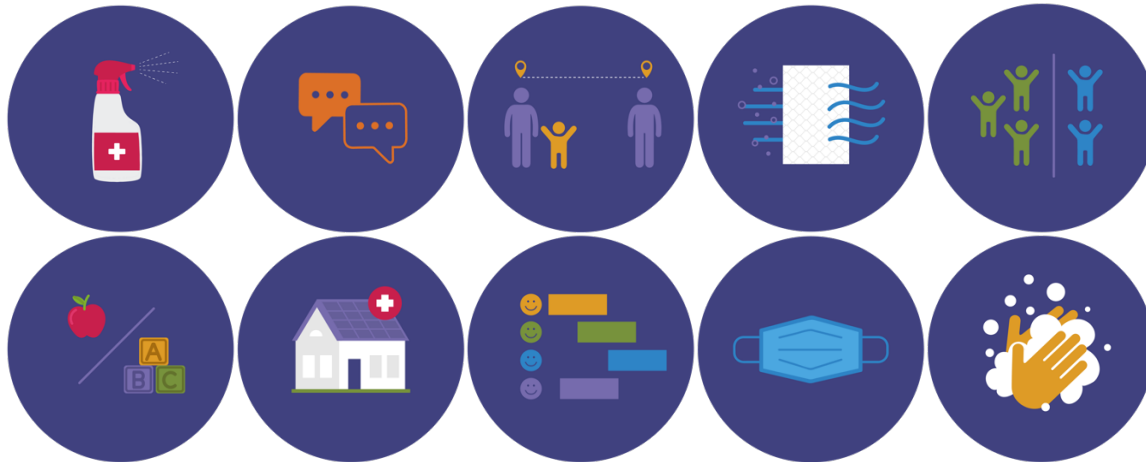
- a fever of 100° or more
- diarrhea (>1 incidence)
- been vomiting
- unusual yellow color to skin
- a severe cough
- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- skin or eye lesions
- a severe rash
- complaints of severe pain



Then wait 24hrs

You must keep your child out of care until fever free and/or until it has been 24 hours since the first dose of antibiotics, last incident of vomiting or diarrhea, and/or until other severe symptoms have passed.

**** Due to the evolving nature of our guidelines in the era of Covid-19, please visit www.mudpiespreschool.com for the latest information on how to navigate sickness.***



Medication Policy

We do not administer any medication, over-the-counter or prescription, without your signed consent. Any medication must be clearly labeled with child's name and dosing instructions. We cannot give a child over-the-counter medication which is not labeled for their age range or isn't prescribed for them. Due to liability and risk, we reserve the right to refuse to administer any medication. *Do not store any medications or lotions, etc. in your child's cubby or bag, as children may get access to them.* If you need to bring any medications, diaper creams, etc, please label them with your child's full name, and directly hand them to a staff person to put in locked storage.

Meals & Snacks

Our goal is to serve a variety of healthy child-friendly foods. We serve a vegetarian menu, featuring whole foods, fresh and seasonal organic fruits and vegetables, whole grains, 1% organic milk, and filtered water. You'll find our monthly menu posted on our private Facebook group, as well as on the wall near the front door. We serve a breakfast, lunch, and pm snack. Children have access to drinking water throughout the day. We participate in the USDA food program. This means we serve meals planned around the USDA's food pyramid model. The program requires drop-in monitoring visits throughout the year, and we submit menus each month in order to receive partial reimbursement for the meals and snacks we serve. When your child enrolls, we will have you fill out a food enrollment form. We plan meals approximately every 3 hours, so that children will get plenty of opportunity to choose from healthy foods throughout the day. We do not force children to eat. We do ask children to try new foods. We do expect children to sit together at the table. The children often participate in food preparation for meals and snacks. Children are encouraged to practice their table manners, including sharing in appropriate mealtime conversation with adults and the other children. We take mealtimes as an opportunity to talk about healthy food choices, new tastes. We ask children to be polite about foods they may not want to eat (example: If you don't like it, quietly leave it on your plate).

Food Allergies & Sensitivities/Substitutions

If your child has a food allergy or sensitivity, please note this on enrollment forms, and notify staff upon enrollment, so that we can arrange to work around it. If a special food or substitution is required, you may have to supply that food. The USDA food program also has a form that will need to be signed by the child's doctor, specifying the allergy and allowable substitutions. If you prefer that your child not be served fluid cow's milk or soy milk, for example, you will need to request a doctor's note stating the appropriate substitute.

Rest Time

In our mixed-age program, we strive to meet each child's individual sleep needs. The American Academy of Pediatrics and The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommend 11-13 hours of sleep per night for preschool age children. Some children receive all the sleep they need in one long stretch at night, while other's sleep occurs in increments. Please provide us with as much information as possible about your child's nap and sleep habits at home.

It is our ultimate goal for children to learn to recognize their body's own symptoms of tiredness. Our teachers will work with each child to identify their own symptoms. If a child is resistant to taking the time to rest, but they are just too tired to be able to keep safe or keep others safe, their struggle to resign to resting should be recognized and validated. "I know you really want to keep playing. I want you to play, but your body is just too tired to keep you safe right now. I am going to help you come inside." We will work together in learning each child and how to support them during this time.

While it is different for everyone, we find that most two, three, and four year olds still need naps throughout their day. By the age of 5, most children have matured into the adult pattern of only sleeping at night. When this milestone is reached, (and it may vary depending on the day) one staff member might remain with those who do not need nap, while the other teachers remain inside to support those who are resting.

All children in our program have their own cot to rest on. We wash the nap mats each week and as needed. We arrange children throughout the child care space according to their sleep habits (longest nappers together). After they participate in a rest period of 20-45 minutes, children are given the option to look at books quietly or do a quiet activity until snack at 3:00pm.

Open Door Policy

We have an "open door policy." This means that anytime your child is here, you are more than welcome to stop in. Please keep in mind that the rest period is typically 1:00-3:00pm and we try to minimize disruptions during that time.

Parents have free access to any child care space (main room, kitchen, bathroom). The front door is opened with a coded keypad, and all families with children enrolled will receive this code.* We do ask that you remember that this is also a private residence, and refrain from

entering before or after business hours, and to consider the code equivalent to a house key and keep the knowledge of the code private. If you have someone besides your partner or spouse arriving to pick up or drop off your child, the teachers are always available to let them in. We ask that you not share the door code with people outside your immediate family.

**We've moved to a touchless system without entering, thus we do not share the code.*

Serious Injuries

We make every effort to ensure the safety of your child while in care. Unfortunately, accidents can occur. We will notify you by phone of any injury that may require more than simple first aid. In case of a serious injury, we will take the appropriate steps to get your child the medical care they need. In case of a serious emergency, we will call 911 and have your child brought to the nearest hospital, if needed. We will then make every effort to contact you as soon as possible. If we cannot reach either parent, we will call one of the emergency contacts listed on your child's information form.

Photography

Digital photography is one method we use to document children's learning. We use these photos many different ways, with parental permission. We will ask you to sign a photography consent form, giving us permission to use photos in the ways you find acceptable.

- Photos are posted on an invite-only Facebook page for parents and grandparents.
- Our business website and public Facebook page utilizes many photos for the purpose of illustrating our program's approach and philosophy. We will never post names or personal information about the children on the public website.

Mandatory Reporting

All of our staff are state-mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. We must report to authorities any situation in which a "reasonable person may suspect possible abuse or neglect."

Right to Change Policies

We reserve the right to add, delete, modify, or amend the policies set forth in this handbook with 30 days of written notice.

The End of The Parent Handbook