



Early Childhood Program

As we prepare plans for the 2020-21 school year, we are following our County and State regulations for Kindergarten and Preschools during COVID-19 and incorporating guidance from the American Association of Pediatrics.

We have worked diligently to create a plan that places the health of children, families, and teachers at its center while remaining true to our commitment to the beauty and integrity of our Waldorf program. As the school year unfolds, we will continue to stay informed and to seek guidance and updates that will allow us to adapt the program as needed. We are pleased to share with you the following plan for Early Childhood's reopening this fall of 2020:

Class Groupings and Placement

Class sizes will be reduced (Kindergarten to 10 to 15 children per class and Nursery to 10 children per class). Each class will have one teacher and one assistant. Children and teachers in a class will remain together during the school day. Adults will not 'float' between groups and class groups will not intermingle with other groups to decrease the potential exposure to other children and adults and thus lessen the chances of spreading COVID-19. However, occasions may arise when an additional staff member may join a particular group if needed.

Each year teachers take great care to place children in healthy groups that balance individual needs with group dynamics. Classes this year will receive the same level of attention. The smaller group size and individual family needs may affect placement of returning students. Placement letters will go out by August 1st, allowing us time to account for any changes in family decisions and/or state county guidelines and regulations in the next few weeks.

Physical Space

Outdoor Play Areas: We will be outdoors a great deal more than we usually are to take advantage of the fresh air and our beautiful San Diego weather. We have designated spaces so that each Kindergarten and Nursery class will have access to their own outdoor play space. The large Early Childhood yard will be separated into play spaces to be used by the Kindergarten classes. Individual Kindergarten classes will occupy different areas of the yard each week in a rotation schedule. Nursery classes will have their designated outdoor space in either the Sweet Pea yard or the fenced "parent area." Outdoor equipment will be cleaned and disinfected between classes. We will spend time this summer enhancing each space so that they are unique and enjoyable play areas that each include a shaded area.

Indoor Play Areas: Each class will also have a designated, well ventilated, indoor classroom. Each child will have a personal cubby space where they can store their outer wear, lunch, water bottle and change of

clothes. Indoor play areas will be simplified. Toys that cannot be easily cleaned and sanitized will be removed. Individual baskets will be provided for each child for some activities such as coloring or sewing. Toys, tables, etc. will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

Curriculum

We are adapting our curriculum to spending more time in nature and less time in the classroom. We will be introducing new activities as well as adapting some traditionally inside activities to outside. Practical work and seasonal activities will continue to be rich and inviting.

Each class will have a rhythm to their day and week which will be shared with you by your child's teacher before school begins. Some snack preparation will be included in that rhythm, however it will be modified while the teachers and children acclimate to their new program. More information will be provided by your child's teacher prior to the start of school.

We value parent support. Current safety guidelines unfortunately do not allow for parents to be helpers in the classroom or on the yard. Please ask your child's teacher for opportunities to support the class through work that can be completed at home.

Birthday celebrations are another activity that will be modified in response to safety protocols and campus visitation restrictions. Teachers are in discussion about various ways we can honor this meaningful day in the child's year.

Program Hours

Nursery program hours will be 8:30-1:00.

At this time, morning care, nap, and aftercare will not be available options for Nursery classes. We understand this will be challenging for a few families who wanted full day care. As we weigh the health risks, financial impact, and current regulations, we have determined this schedule is the best first step for reopening our school. As the year progresses, we will continue to review our available options and extend the program day as soon as we are able for those parents who need a longer school day for their child.

Kindergarten program options:

Full Day 8:30-2:45 : At this time, there will be limited kindergarten spaces available for our Full Day program. There will be no morning care or extended care options beyond 2:45. Priority for the Full Day option will be given to children whose parents work outside of the home and have no other options for childcare. Priority will also be given to children who have siblings in our grade school. We thank those parents who indicated they can be flexible with the length of day and wait until we expand with additional spaces for Full Day and Extended Care. As the year progresses, we will continue to review our available options and extend the program day as soon as we are able for those parents who need a longer school day for their child.

Morning Only 8:30-1:00 : Our morning kindergarten hours will be 8:30-1:00. At this time, morning care will not be an available option. As the year progresses, we will continue to review our available options and reinstate morning care as soon as we are able.

Drop Off and Pick Up

The details of drop off and pick up times are being refined and teachers will notify you of specifics for your class prior to the start of school. Arrival and departure times will be slightly staggered around the times listed above. Here is a general outline of the EC process:

Nursery: Following the morning wellness check/sign in, teachers will greet the children at their car and walk them to their outside yard area. The gates to these yards are directly off the parking lot. Parents/caregivers will be asked to exit the parking lot making room for the next families to arrive. At pick up time, children will be in their play yards and when a parent/caregiver is identified, the teacher will walk the child out to their car.

Kindergarten: Following the morning wellness check/sign in, teachers will greet the children at their car and walk them to their class 'train station' which will be a designated area adjacent to the parking lot. Each class will have their own 'train station' with an area to sit and gather together before heading off on their 'train' to class. At pick up time the teachers will bring the 'trains' of children back to their stations. Teachers will walk the children to their cars when their parent/ caregiver arrives.

Physical Health and Hygiene

The school holds the health of our community members at the center of all our planning. Strict adherence to the school's health and wellness policies will be maintained for the benefit of all. Please familiarize yourself with the daily health screening procedure, drop off /pick up procedures, school policies and expectations regarding sick children, teachers, and family members. Your first class parent meeting will include a review of these policies and procedures.

Teachers will model frequent handwashing and support children in regular, thorough hand washing whether inside or outside at 'handwashing' stations. Teachers will clean and disinfect high touch surfaces such as sink knobs, toilet handles, tables and door handles throughout the day following state and county regulations.

Masks/ Shields and Social Distancing

After great deliberation and research, the following decisions have been made in an effort to balance the developmental stage of the children with the health of the children and teachers. At this time, children in Early Childhood will only be required to wear masks when they may be in contact with others outside their classroom such as when entering or exiting the parking lot and other public areas. Teachers will use creative, imaginative pictures and modeling to assist the children in wearing their masks during these

times. Children will not be required to wear masks or shields once inside their own yard or classroom. We feel it would be an inappropriate expectation for children of this age to keep a mask or shield on for the entire morning of work and play. Teachers will be required to wear masks and/or shields throughout the day.

While children will be guided in activities and meals in a way that allows for more space between individual children, they will not be required to socially distance from one another in their play. We will be relying on health screenings, smaller class sizes, hygiene and sanitization practices, and increased outdoor time as the main health measures for this age group.

Mealtime and Water Bottles

Snacks and lunch will be held outside picnic style or inside the classroom with additional spacing between students. On days when a school snack is provided, it will be served by the teachers in compostable/disposable containers until restrictions are loosened and we can return to washable dishes. Lunches will be brought from home including utensils and cloth napkins.

Water bottles, provided from home and labelled with your child's name, will be filled by the teachers as needed throughout the day.

More information will be provided by your child's teacher prior to the start of school.

Naptime

Children will nap in their own room with the same group they were with in the morning. Nap mats will be laid out in a way that maximizes distancing and with a simple barrier between rows. Children will not wear masks or shields during naptime. Individual mats and bedding will be fully bagged/stored each day and washed/ sanitized each week. Teachers will inform parents of details prior to the start of school.

Social and Emotional Health and Integration into School

We recognize that during the school closure many children were not physically interacting with others outside their immediate family. By the time school reopens, most children will not have been in a school or childcare setting for six months. And for some children this will be their first school experience. We anticipate some children may have increased difficulty separating from their family member or caregiver at drop off. We are working on developing ways to help children transition from home to school and to integrate more easily with new friends, teachers, and school day.

Here are a few supports we have in place currently:

Teacher Home Visits - Your child's teacher will contact you to arrange a visit with your child at their home before school begins. This will be held outside with social distancing.

Photo collage - Each child will receive a photo collage of pictures of their teachers and classmates-if all parents are comfortable sharing a photo of their child for this purpose. The teacher will contact you about this. (please let this be a surprise)

Each child will receive a story friend to care for at home and bring to school with them. The dolls will stay in the child's personal cubby at school. (please let this be a surprise)

Teacher / Parent communications via phone or email to share information about your child and their needs.

Individualized support - Teachers will work with individual families and children to help tailor a transition experience that works for your child.

Teachers are participating in professional development workshops to enhance their skills and inspire their work with the children.

Teachers will help the daily transition from home to school by greeting the children in the morning when they arrive and walking them to class and then walking them back out to the parents in the afternoon.

Parent Class Meetings, Conferences, Parent Handbook, Contact Information

This year all scheduled class parent meetings and parent/teacher conferences will be held via Zoom. Additional information and communications may be offered via google classroom.

The EC Parent Handbook will be sent out to parents electronically before the first parent meeting in August.

Your teacher's contact information will be included in your placement letter which will be sent out by August 1.

Calendar of Events

We will begin our year celebrating our festivals in our smaller groups during the school day with no parents present. Additionally, some of our activities like the yard work day, kindergarten tea/nursery cubby day, and end of year picnics will need to be modified or cancelled until restrictions are lifted. We will remain cautious in our approach even as restrictions are lifted, and at that time will consider possible ways to hold smaller class events outdoors with distancing. Teachers will notify their class parents of any changes.

Here is the schedule of EC events as we look to reopen this fall:

Home Visits August TBD	To be scheduled by teacher and arranged according to parent and teacher comfort level.
Parent Orientation Meeting Saturday, August 22 ,9:00-11:00	Zoom
Classroom Parent Meetings	Zoom to be determined by teacher
Yard Work Day Katherine Giglio email: kgiglio@waldorfsandiego.org	Group event cancelled. There are a few outdoor projects we could use some parent help to complete this summer. If you are interested please email Katherine with your availability. Thank you!!

Kindergarten Tea and Nursery Cubby Day	We are in the process of developing a healthy way to receive your changes of clothes, boots,hats, etc. and introduce new children to the class.
Wanderer's Way Friday, October 30 Wed., October 28 for 3 day Nursery class	Group event cancelled. There will be a Halloween Celebration during the class with a special snack, story, and pumpkin crafts/activities.
Parent/Teacher Conferences November	Zoom - To be determined by teacher
Soup Social/Lantern Walk Friday, November 20 Wed., Nov. 18 for 3 day Nursery class	Larger group event cancelled. Teachers will find alternative ways to hold this festival with the children in their individual classroom groups.
Kindergarten St. Nicholas Visit Friday, December 4	This year St. Nicholas will deliver his loving words and special treats "sight unseen" to each class.
Winter Advent Spiral	Teachers and children will experience an Advent Spiral celebration of light during their class.
Spring EC Marionette Show	To be determined by EC faculty
Parent/Teacher End of Year Conferences May	Zoom - To be determined by teacher
End of Year Class Picnics	Group event cancelled. Teachers and children will have a last day celebration in class.

Rolling Closures

If or when we experience a school closure, we will offer distance learning as we did in the Spring, and at that time, we will retrospectively consider a tuition reduction based upon the financial position of the school.