

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY PARENT HANDBOOK 2022-2023**

*The ECC handbook contains important elaborations, refinements, or changes to the NWMS Parent Handbook, Toddler–Upper Elementary Communities. Please find the 2022-2023 TC-UE Parent Handbook on our website. Both manuals are revised as needed.*

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY STAFF**

#### **ECC 1 Staff**

Annie Rebori: Lead Guide ([annie.rebori@naureswaymontessori.com](mailto:annie.rebori@naureswaymontessori.com))

Caitlin Crowley: Assistant Guide

#### **ECC 2 Staff**

Kelly Pryor: Lead Guide ([kelly.pryor@naureswaymontessori.com](mailto:kelly.pryor@naureswaymontessori.com))

Erin Collins: Assistant Guide

#### **ECC Support Staff**

Caylie Chapman: Support Guide and Extended Day Lead Guide

### **OUTDOOR STAFF**

Heather Zeiger: Outdoor Lead Guide

Caylie Chapman

### **RESOURCE STAFF AND SCHEDULE**

Isabel Zuniga: Spanish

Wednesdays 10:30-11:00 Kindergarteners

Wednesdays 11-11:30 1st and 2nd year students

Dawn Kunkel: Art

Thursdays 11:00-11:30 ECC1

Fridays 11:00-11:30 ECC2

Sarah Ringer: Music

Thursdays 10:45-11:30 ECC1 1st and 2nd years

Fridays 10:15-10:45 Kindergarteners

Fridays 10:45-11:30 ECC2 1st and 2nd years

### **EARLY MORNING CARE (7:30-8:00; Drop-off stops at 7:45)**

Children who arrive before 7:45 need to be enrolled in Early Morning Care, which is held on the playground starting at 7:30 am. Please follow the regular drop-off procedures; a staff member will be in front of the Middle Building to conduct check-in procedures.

### **MORNING ARRIVAL (8:15-8:30)**

Arrival begins at 8:15 and ends *promptly* at 8:30. **Please do not send your child to the classroom before 8:15.** All families will follow drop-off procedures. Please drive to the designated drop-off screening station, a staff member will conduct the health check. Please be sure your child is seated on the side closest to the sidewalk and has their lunch box and canvas bag ready. After the screening process, your child will be invited to exit the car and proceed to their classroom.

Let your child know ahead of time about the drop-off procedure (i.e., “In ECC, I say goodbye to you in the car”). Children feel comfortable when they know the routine in the morning and it doesn’t change. Know that we are experts at tears and at helping a child integrate into their new environment with ease. If you think there is a reason to believe your child will be distraught and exhibit significant separation anxiety, please talk to us before the first day and we will create a plan with you. Please review these procedures with anyone responsible for dropping off your child.

If your child arrives after 8:30 and a staff member is no longer at the check-in tent, please call the office to arrange a staff member to meet you in the driveway to conduct the check-in procedures. *You may not escort your child to the classroom yourself.* We encourage you to make every effort to arrive *on time*, as it is highly important for your child’s day. They can experience the personal greeting by staff members and will not miss early morning transition routines with friends. Most importantly, it relieves anxiety on the part of the child and does not disrupt the normal progress of the classroom. We are not a drop-in facility and we expect students to arrive during our greeting time unless there is a valid excuse such as a doctor’s appointment. **Please contact the school or your child’s teacher if you will be late.**

Our goal is for your child to feel welcomed and cared for. It is normal for a parent to leave school worried about their child’s transition. Please feel free to call the school and ask how your child is doing if you are concerned and let us know about any transition problems you have.

### **MORNING WORK TIME (8:15-11:30)**

During the morning work cycle children will be given lessons individually and in groups. They will move through periods of intense concentration using classroom materials, quietly socializing with their peers, and caring for their classroom.

This will be a three-hour uninterrupted work time. For that reason, staff will not be available for parent communication in the mornings. Please leave a note in your child's bag, email, or contact the office if you need to be in touch with the lead guide. If your child has forgotten something (lunch, canvas bag, pizza money, etc.), contact the office to make arrangements to get the forgotten item(s) to the classroom.

Children may be working inside, outside, in individual spaces, or in small groups. Because of this, children are expected to be prepared for all situations. Please provide a well-fitting mask, outdoor clothing, and changes of clothing for your child.

## **SNACK**

Please provide a snack each day for your child to access during the morning work time. We will provide time and space for each child to eat. To help your child and staff members regulate snack food and lunch food, please pack these items in a separate container or label them as snacks. We also recommend that you discuss with your child which foods may be appropriate for snacks or meals. Students who attend Extended Day should bring more than one snack for the day.

## **LUNCH (11:30-12:00)**

We eat lunch as a group in the classroom and deck areas. As this is an essential practical life experience, the adults will model appropriate eating habits, clean-up procedures, and polite conversation by eating with the students. Adults and older children are available to assist those that need help (opening containers, cleaning spills, etc.).

Please **label** your child's lunchbox and every container you send, both the top and bottom. Lunch boxes and food containers should be simple and easy for your child to open and close. Containers should fit in the lunch box with room to spare so your child can successfully repack all items independently. Our cubby spaces where lunchboxes are stored are approximately 12in. x 12in and are shared with one other student. Please avoid cumbersome lunch boxes and ensure that all containers and water bottles are leak-proof, as children may turn lunchboxes on their side to fit.

**See p. 9-10 in the *NWMS Parent Handbook Toddler –Upper Elementary Communities* for information about the content of lunches, appropriate containers, etc.**

## **FRIDAY PIZZA DAY**

We offer an optional pizza lunch on Fridays for \$5. Along with pizza, we will serve a variety of fruit, veggies, grains, and water. You can either pay weekly or for the entire school year. Those students paying weekly should bring pizza money (***in cash only – no checks, please***) to class Friday morning in their bag. If you are paying for the whole year, you may do so by check

*payable to Nature's Way for \$160* (32 Fridays x \$5). We use this as a fundraiser for the classroom.

If your child does not want to eat pizza, you may pack a lunch per usual. We suggest packing an extra snack on pizza days if your child does eat pizza.

### **OUTDOOR TIME (12:00-1:00)**

Children are dismissed to the outdoor area after restoring their lunch space and dressing for the weather. Outdoor and classroom guides will be supervising the ECC community from 12:00-1:00 PM.

***We try to get outside every day. Please send your child with appropriate outdoor wear for all types of weather.*** In the case of inclement weather, we may have an abbreviated outdoor time. The tree canopy provides a nice buffer from the rain, and we are often outside during periods of light showers. Please send rubber boots and a raincoat when rain is forecasted; children may also store these items at school. A warm coat, hat, and gloves are essential for winter weather and allow your child to enjoy their time outside. Close-toed shoes help children to feel comfortable running, hiking the nature trail, and doing more active games. We encourage full exploration of our outdoor environment, and your children may come home with dirty clothing. Please send appropriate attire for this.

### **NAP TIME (12:45-2:15)**

Any child needing a nap will rest on a mat in the extended day classroom. They will come in from the playground to rest by 12:45 P.M. and will be up no later than 2:15 P.M. Students will be asked to stay on their nap mats for adequate time to achieve sleep. If the child does not sleep, we will invite the child to remain resting or return to work.

The school provides nap mats. Please provide a fitted crib sheet and a light blanket; you may also send a small stuffed animal if needed for comfort. We ask that students who nap pack a separate set of extra clothes to be stored in the nap space. During the first week of school, we will provide a bag for transporting nap items. All nap items should be sent in this bag Monday morning and will remain at school during the week. All nap items will be sent home on Friday in the nap bag to be washed and returned Monday morning.

Please notify your child's teacher before the first day of school if your child will be napping.

### **AFTERNOON WORK TIME (1:00-2:30)**

All children who do not nap will return to their classroom after their outside time at 1 P.M. for an afternoon work period. This time is generally designated for a book workshop; students will receive a short language lesson followed by an extended free reading time. Children may also be outside with outdoor staff during this time for various lessons and work opportunities. Other students may choose lessons individually.

## **DISMISSAL (2:30)**

Staff will dismiss students from the seating area in front of the Middle Building. Remain in your vehicle and a staff member will place your child in their seat. To ensure safety and efficiency, staff members are not available for conversation at this time. If you would like a check-in about your child's day, please let us know.

Any children not picked up at 2:30 will be escorted back to the playground and enrolled in Extended Day. You will be billed for this time according to the Extended Day fee schedule.

## **EXTENDED DAY (2:30-5:30)**

Those enrolled spend time outside and in their classrooms, where a variety of materials and lessons are available. Children will be able to have a snack brought from home during this time.

Children will be dismissed to the curb in front of the Middle Building only on the half-hour. Please pull up to the pickup point at your designated time to meet your child. A staff member will help your child into their car.

*Extended day ends promptly at 5:30.*

## **CANVAS BAGS**

Each child will have a canvas bag with their name on it provided by the school. The bag should come to school every day. It should contain at least one change of clothes (including a change of mask) and several pairs of socks in a labeled one-gallon plastic zip lock bag. **ALL** of your child's clothing, including what they wear into the classroom, must be labeled so it can be sent home if found outside the bag.

We encourage you to use the clear front pocket for notes to the teacher. We will also use it to send messages home. *Please assist your child in checking their bag every night.* Help them take out work or notes they may have brought home. Ensure toys and other distracting items have not made it into the bag (or their pockets!). **TOYS OF ANY KIND MAY NOT COME TO SCHOOL** (distracting jewelry included). Such items can be highly distracting and children become upset if anything is lost or broken. If toys make it as far as the classroom, the teacher will carefully put them away until the end of the day.

Periodically children will bring home a plastic folder containing their completed work. The folder should be emptied and returned to school the next day.

## **CLOTHING**

This is the age of independence. Please send your children in clothing and shoes that they can take on and off on their own. For the youngest students, elastic waistbands, loose-fitting shirts, and Velcro shoes are ideal. As their ability to work with fasteners develops, clothing with zippers, buttons, and snaps can be incorporated. *Please do not send shoes with laces unless your*

*child can tie them.* Children take their shoes off upon entering the classroom but are required to have their feet covered. Most students choose to wear socks, but simple slippers are also acceptable. Be sure to send multiple pairs of extra socks, as they often get wet or dirty.

Learning to dress and care for oneself is an exciting process during this developmental stage. Many children will repeatedly change for the sake of mastering these skills. You might find your child's clothes are on backward or shoes on the wrong feet. It is essential to be aware of not discouraging them by pointing out "mistakes." This is part of the normal process and they take great pride in being able to dress by themselves.

Students will be engaging in many environments and situations each day. Please send weather-appropriate changes of clothing and outdoor gear. Children may store rain gear at school.

### **CONFERENCES/COMMUNICATION**

We offer conferences in the fall and spring. Conferences are not mandatory, but it is helpful to talk with you about your child's growth and progress. It is valuable for us to get to know your family better and learn more about your child. If you would like to talk at any other time, please do not hesitate to request a meeting.

Communication with you about your child is vital to us. We encourage you to communicate any questions, concerns, or information that will help us as we work with your child. You are the expert on your child, and we value your feedback and collaboration. You may reach us via email, notes, and phone messages left in the office. We will return any messages as soon as we are able. Please know that we will also communicate any questions, concerns, or observations about your child to you as needed.

### **WALK AROUND THE SUN BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

In ECC, the Walk Around the Sun ceremony is a special way that we celebrate birthdays. Please provide a picture from each year of your child's life. If you want to use multiple pictures for each year, please mount them all onto one sheet. A single poster board can also be used. Provide a short description with any notable information and developmental milestones from each year or a brief description of the pictures. If your child has a summer birthday, please let us know if you would like us to celebrate it before the end of the school year.

**PLEASE PRINT, FILL OUT, AND RETURN TO SCHOOL**

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom \_\_\_\_\_

**Please fill out the following form, sign it, and return it to your child's class at the beginning of the school year.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have labeled every item of clothing and have a full change of clothes in a labeled Ziploc bag.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have labeled every lunch box item & the lunch box and containers are simple, easy for my child to open and close, and will fit in the cubby space.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the ECC Parent Handbook & Nature's Way Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and understood the COVID-19 Safety Document

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that toys and distracting jewelry do not come to school.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the policy on nutritious lunches and snacks, which includes no desserts and an acceptable liquid (water, 90%+ juices, or plain milk).

\_\_\_\_\_ If my child naps, I have notified their teacher and have labeled all nap items.