



WILD SPROUTS  
NATURE PROGRAM  
FAMILY  
HANDBOOK

2024-2025

# Wild Sprouts Family Handbook

Welcome to Wild Sprouts! We are delighted to have your child participate in our enriching and engaging preschool and homeschool classes. This Family Handbook is designed to provide you with essential information about Wild Sprouts classes, our teaching approach, policies, and expectations. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team. Let's nurture your child's curiosity and love for learning together!

## **Our Philosophy:**

At Wild Sprouts, we firmly believe that spending ample time outside, exploring nature, and engaging in hands-on activities is not only beneficial but also essential for a child's holistic development. By nurturing their innate sense of wonder, creativity, and imagination, we aim to ignite a spark that will guide them on a lifelong journey of exploration and discovery. We cherish the belief that nature is a remarkable teacher, offering invaluable lessons that textbooks alone cannot impart. Through our nature-inspired curriculum, we aspire to cultivate a deep appreciation for the environment, instilling in each child a sense of responsibility as stewards of our planet.

## **Our Mission:**

Our mission is to cultivate a deep connection between children and the natural world, inspiring a lifelong love for learning. We provide a nurturing and enriching environment where young minds can explore, discover, and grow amidst the beauty and magic of nature. By blending a nature-inspired curriculum with proven teaching methodologies, we aim to foster curiosity, creativity, and environmental stewardship in each child. Our dedicated team of educators is committed to empowering children with the skills, knowledge, and values they need to become compassionate, responsible, and resilient individuals. Together, we embark on a transformative journey of exploration and discovery, laying the foundation for a bright future filled with endless possibilities.

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## Hours of Operation and Class Calendar

Wild Sprouts offers a variety of classes Monday through Friday 9:30am-12:30pm. Please [click here](#) to view our 2024-2025 Class Calendar. You can find more information about our available preschool and homeschool programs [here](#).

## Drop Off and Pick Up Details

When you arrive at the farm, please bring your child to the designated area for drop off. Given that it's a working farm and we are dependent on the weather, please know this location will vary between our classroom field and the two red barns on the property. Your child's teacher will communicate with you via Brightwheel as the location changes.

Please note, there are no sidewalks so you'll want to wear appropriate shoes to bring your child to the designated location.

**Late Pick Up:** Please pick your child up by 12:30pm. If you are later than 12:45pm, there will be a charge of \$15.00 per child for each 15 minute period. This late fee will be charged to your account.

**Authorized Pick Ups:** If you plan to have someone pick up your child, other than the parents/guardians known to teachers, please communicate through Brightwheel letting the teacher know who is authorized to pick up your child.

Please note, Wild Sprouts operates as a licensed summer camp which offers year-round nature programs. The organization is not a licensed childcare facility. Given this, each child may attend class without a parent up to 20 hours per month. If your child attends any programs or classes for 20 hours or more per month, a parent or caregiver must be on property for any additional time. This limit does not apply during the summer camp season.

## Tuition and Enrollment Changes

Monthly tuition is due on the 25th of the month prior, in advance for the month, and will be considered late after the 1st of the month. A late payment charge of \$25.00 per week will be applied to your account until the balance is paid in full.

Should you choose to withdraw from Wild Sprouts, a 30-day written notice is required.

## What to Bring to Class

### **Snack:**

Please pack a wholesome snack that is nut-free to accommodate children with allergies. We encourage you to choose snacks that are nutritious and energy-boosting, as our outdoor activities can be quite engaging. Ice packs and thermoses help keep food warm and cold. We do not have a refrigerator and do not heat food. If you are able, please pack a cloth napkin or bandana with your child's snack. We will be using them as placemats to try to cut down on the mess (and hopefully attract less wasps). Please label your child's lunch box, thermos, and ice pack with their name in case of loss. We will be outdoors and on the go every day.

### **Water:**

Please make sure your child packs their filled water bottle daily to ensure they stay hydrated. We are very active and typically outdoors 90% of our day. We will take breaks and make sure that each child is drinking water to maintain a comfortable body temperature. Teachers will encourage them to drink often during play. Please label your child's water bottle - we will be taking it around with us when we explore the farm.

### **Toys from Home:**

Children love bringing a little bit of home with them wherever they go! We leave it up to each teacher as to whether they allow toys from home in their classroom. If your child brings a toy from home, it is their responsibility to keep up with it. Please note that it is not the teacher's responsibility, nor Wild Sprouts' responsibility, to keep it from getting lost or broken. Do not let them bring fragile items, electronic items, or any items that resemble a weapon.

### **Footwear:**

It is important to provide appropriate footwear for any weather to ensure your child can explore freely. Children need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping, and climbing. Sneakers or well-fitting hiking boots are best. Waterproof shoes like Crocs are great too. Your child will need rain boots for wet and rainy days and also for visiting the creek. Please make sure your child has extra socks in case of wet feet.

### **Clothing Recommendations:**

Outdoor discovery requires freedom of movement in non-restrictive clothing that offers protection from the weather. This is why we recommend that you dress your child in layers when appropriate. Here is a [great guide from Outdoor School Shop](#) for dressing your child in layers so that they are comfortable during their Wild Sprouts class.

Always dress your child in clothing that can get messy, so they will feel free to participate in messy projects, and splash in mud puddles. Expect that your child (and their clothing) will get dirty! If at any time your child's clothing becomes wet and/or uncomfortable, they will change into their extra set of clothes following the activity.

We have our own hidden shop on Outdoor School Shop's website. They curated a collection of gear for our local climate, and you receive 15% off of any full-price order. The discount code for 15% off is SPROUTS, and the link is <http://outdoorschoolshop.com/schools/wild-sprouts>. We also have our own discount for Ella's Wool (<https://ellaswool.com/>) - it is 15% off with code WILD\_SPROUTS15.

### **Extra Clothes:**

A bag with at least one complete change of clothes is required in the event your child spills or has an accident. A large name-labeled ziplock bag with clean socks, underwear, and an appropriate seasonal outfit should always stay in your child's backpack. Be sure to update backup clothes seasonally. Please note, if a child has an accident and does not have a change of clothes, a parent or caregiver will be required to pick them up immediately.

### **Sunscreen and Bug Spray:**

Please pack sunscreen and bug spray in your child's bag, and label both with their name. Apply sunscreen and bug spray before dropping your child off. We can re-apply throughout the day as needed.

## **Birthdays at Wild Sprouts**

Birthdays are a special time, and we are happy to celebrate them at Wild Sprouts. Celebrating your child's birthday with their classmates is optional, but if you choose to do so, we have a few guidelines to ensure that everyone enjoys the day:

- **Keep it Simple:** Birthday celebrations should be simple and easy to manage in our outdoor setting.
- **Invitations:** If you plan to distribute party invitations at school, please invite all classmates to avoid hurt feelings. If inviting only some classmates, we ask that you distribute invitations outside of school to maintain an inclusive environment.
- **Treats and Allergies:** You are welcome to send a birthday treat for the class. Please inform us at least a week in advance and check with the teacher regarding any food allergies to ensure all children can participate safely. Treats will be shared during snack or lunch time.

- **Supplies:** If you are providing food, please bring plates and utensils.
- **Summer Birthdays:** For children with summer birthdays, we are happy to celebrate their half-birthday during the school year.

### **Birthday Book Tradition**

Another meaningful way to celebrate your child's birthday at Wild Sprouts is by donating a book to the school. This tradition helps foster a love of reading and learning. You may send a book wrapped in birthday paper for your child to open during circle time, where it will be shared with the group. We kindly ask that the book be a story that can be enjoyed by the whole class. Educational games or toys are also appreciated as a special gift for the school.

### **Weapons Policy**

No guns or weapons of any sort are permitted on the premises by staff or visitors unless carried by those engaged in official duties of law enforcement, security, or the military. Possession of a valid concealed weapons permit authorized by the state of Maryland is not an exemption under this policy.

### **Daily Class Rhythm**

Wild Sprouts classes follow a carefully crafted daily rhythm that embraces the beauty of nature while providing a nurturing learning environment for your child. Our approach is designed to encourage curiosity, creativity, and a love for exploration. While we don't adhere to a rigid schedule, our daily rhythm typically includes the following components:

1. **Welcome Circle:** Each day begins with a warm and welcoming circle where our teachers and children gather to greet one another. This circle fosters a sense of community and sets the tone for the day ahead.
2. **Nature-Based Activity:** Children engage in a nature-based activity. These activities are thoughtfully designed to integrate various aspects of our nature-inspired curriculum, allowing children to connect with the natural world while learning and having fun.
3. **Nature Walk:** Our nature walk is a cherished part of the day where children embark on a peaceful journey around the farm. Together with their teachers, they observe the seasonal changes, discover natural wonders, and visit our beloved farm animals, including the chickens and goats. This mindful stroll allows children

to experience the sights, sounds, and textures of nature up close, fostering curiosity, empathy for animals, and a deep connection to the world around them.

4. **Reading and Snack:** Mid-morning, we come together for a delightful time where children enjoy a healthy snack surrounded by nature's wonders. During this time, a nature-themed story is shared, captivating young minds and igniting their love for storytelling and reading.
5. **Exploration:** One of the highlights of our day is the exploration time. Children venture into the dedicated outdoor spaces, where they have the freedom to discover and interact with the natural environment. This hands-on exploration nurtures their curiosity and sense of wonder, fostering a deep connection with nature.
6. **Closing Circle:** As the day draws to a close, we gather once again for a closing circle. This circle provides an opportunity to reflect on the day's experiences, celebrate achievements, and express gratitude for the wonders of nature.

At Wild Sprouts, we believe that this flexible daily rhythm allows us to adapt and embrace the spontaneity that comes with being immersed in nature. It enables us to seize teachable moments and tailor our approach to match the unique interests and learning styles of each child. While the rhythm serves as a guide, it also allows us to be attuned to the needs and natural flow of the children's exploration and discovery, fostering an enriching and harmonious learning journey.

## Nature-Inspired Learning

- We believe that connecting with nature enhances children's curiosity, creativity, and overall development. Our classes are thoughtfully designed to integrate various nature-inspired activities that provide meaningful learning experiences for the children.
- During our classes, children engage in outdoor exploration, where they can discover and interact with the natural environment. We have dedicated spaces where children can observe plants, insects, and other elements of nature, fostering a sense of wonder and appreciation for the world around them.
- To nurture creativity and imagination, we offer nature-based art activities. Children use natural materials such as leaves, sticks, and flowers to create art projects, allowing them to express themselves creatively while connecting with the beauty of nature.
- Gardening is another integral aspect of our curriculum. Children are actively involved in planting, caring for, and harvesting fruits, vegetables, and flowers. This hands-on experience teaches them about the life cycle of plants and the importance of sustainable practices.



- Storytelling and nature-themed books are woven into our daily routines. Through storytelling, we introduce children to various animals, ecosystems, and environmental concepts, encouraging their passion for the natural world.
- Our teachers also incorporate nature-based science experiments and activities, where children learn about weather, seasons, and various natural phenomena in a hands-on and interactive way.
- Throughout all classes, we emphasize the concept of environmental stewardship and the importance of taking care of our planet.

## Curriculum and Activities

Nature-based learning is at the core of our curriculum, and we are proud to draw inspiration from multiple renowned curricula including *Wild Math* and *Wild Reading*, both written by Rachel Tidd; *Your Natural Learner*, written by Leah McDermott; and *Blossom and Root*, written by Kristina Garner. By integrating these curricula into our approach, we create a dynamic and comprehensive learning experience that combines the best of both nature-based education and proven teaching methodologies.

- Inspired by *Wild Math*, we infuse mathematical concepts into nature-based activities. Children engage in nature counting, sorting leaves, and exploring patterns in the natural world. By integrating math with nature, we foster a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts in a meaningful context.
- Drawing from the principles of *Wild Reading*, we create a literacy-rich environment that encourages a love for reading and storytelling. Our nature-themed books and storytelling sessions capture children's imaginations and ignite a passion for reading, complementing our nature-based approach.
- *Your Natural Learner* inspires us to provide child-led learning experiences that honor each child's unique interests and learning style. By observing their natural curiosity, we tailor activities to match their passions, empowering them to explore and inquire about the world around them.
- *Blossom and Root* encourages us to nurture the whole child, focusing on creativity, hands-on exploration, and a gentle, holistic approach to early education. By incorporating this curriculum, we emphasize art, music, and storytelling in our daily activities, allowing children to express themselves freely while deepening their connection to nature. This approach fosters not only cognitive development but also emotional and social growth, ensuring that children thrive in all areas of learning.
- Through the integration of these curricula with our nature-based philosophy, we ensure that children receive a well-rounded education that nurtures their love for learning, fosters a deep appreciation for nature, and lays a solid foundation for

academic and personal growth. At Wild Sprouts, we believe that by blending the best of these curricula with our nature-based approach, we create an exceptional learning environment that sparks creativity, curiosity, and a lifelong love for exploration and discovery.

If you are inclined to purchase supplies to support these activities, please visit our [Amazon Wishlist](#). Thank you!

## **Class Size and Teacher-Child Ratio**

We are dedicated to providing personalized attention and a nurturing learning environment for your child. Our maximum teacher-child ratio is 1 teacher to 8 children. However, to ensure even more individualized care and meaningful interactions, we strive to maintain a ratio of 1 teacher or aide to 6 children as much as possible.

Our ratio of 1 teacher or aide to 6 children ensures that your child receives ample support and guidance throughout their journey. This approach enables us to foster strong connections with each child, understand their unique needs, and create a safe space for exploration and discovery. Our low teacher-child ratio and small class sizes allow us to nurture your child's curiosity, foster meaningful relationships, and provide an exceptional early childhood education that embraces their individuality and promotes holistic growth.

## **Health and Safety**

We hold a deep commitment to the well-being and safety of the little adventurers in our outdoor classroom. Our nature-based setting allows children to connect with the natural world while providing a secure learning environment that nurtures their curiosity and sense of wonder. In our open-air sanctuary, we prioritize health and safety through a range of thoughtful practices:

- **Nature-Inspired Cleanliness:** Our outdoor classroom and nature play areas are thoughtfully tended to, ensuring a clean and hygienic environment. We embrace the natural world while also maintaining a keen focus on keeping our spaces tidy and well-maintained.
- **Nature-Proofed for Exploration:** Our outdoor learning spaces are carefully designed to provide a balance of excitement and safety. Nature-proofing measures are in place, encouraging children to explore the magic of the outdoors while feeling safe and secure.

- **Embracing Nature's Rhythms:** In harmony with the outdoors, we integrate nature's rhythms into our routines. Regular handwashing is encouraged upon arrival, before snack time amidst the beauty of nature, and after using the restroom.
- **Outdoor Safety, First Aid, and CPR Certification:** Our lead teachers are certified in outdoor safety, First Aid, and CPR. This equips them to handle any situation with confidence while exploring the wilderness with our little adventurers.
- **Safety and Injury Procedures:** At Wild Sprouts, your child's safety is our top priority. In the event of a minor injury, such as a cut or scrape that requires a bandage, we will document the incident and update you via Brightwheel. For more immediate concerns, such as a bee sting or other non-emergency situations that may require prompt attention, we will call you directly. In the case of an emergency, we will follow our standard emergency procedures, which include contacting emergency services and notifying parents immediately.
- **Allergies and Medical Conditions:** To better care for your child and meet their specific health needs, we require parents to provide us with medical information. Please ensure that you fill out the necessary medical forms, especially if your child has any allergies or medical conditions. This information will remain confidential and will only be shared with relevant staff members who need to be aware of your child's health requirements. Please note, we do not have a designated nurse/medical professional on site.
- **Nature-Inspired Emergency Preparedness:** Our team undergoes regular outdoor safety training and engages in outdoor drills. We are well-prepared to respond effectively to any situation that may arise, ensuring a secure environment for every child.

At Wild Sprouts, we cherish the value of learning in the great outdoors. Our commitment to health and safety, combined with the wonders of nature, sets the stage for a transformative learning experience for your child. We invite you to embark on this extraordinary journey with us, where exploration and discovery take root in the heart of nature, cultivating a lifelong love for learning. Should you have any questions or seek further details about our outdoor classroom practices, our team is here to provide the answers. Let's embrace the enchantment of nature and learn together amidst the beauty of the wild!

## Parent Communication

At Wild Sprouts, we value open and transparent communication with parents. To facilitate this, we use the Brightwheel app, a convenient platform that keeps you actively

involved in your child's learning journey. In addition to daily updates, we offer parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's progress, share insights, and set goals for their development. Should you ever have concerns or wish to schedule an additional meeting, you are always welcome to reach out to us.

Brightwheel provides a user-friendly interface that allows you to receive real-time updates, photos, and messages directly from our teachers. The app employs robust security measures to protect your child's information, ensuring a safe and secure environment for sharing their experiences.

Through both Brightwheel and parent-teacher conferences, we strengthen the partnership between parents and our school. These tools give you valuable insights into your child's day-to-day activities, milestones, and overall growth. If you ever have questions or need assistance with the app, our team is always here to help.

By utilizing these resources, we ensure that your child's educational experience is enriched, well-supported, and tailored to their unique needs.

## **Participation and Engagement**

We cherish the importance of family involvement in our learning community. We understand that each child's journey is unique, and as such, we offer the flexibility of optional drop-off. Parents are more than welcome to stay and actively participate in the classes alongside their little ones.

We believe that providing the option for parents to stay not only fosters a stronger bond between parent and child but also creates a nurturing environment that nurtures a sense of security and comfort for the child. For parents who choose to stay, it offers an excellent opportunity to witness firsthand their child's growth, development, and engagement in our nature-inspired activities.

Additionally, we understand that the transition to a new environment can be both exciting and challenging for young learners. Our approach to drop-off is thoughtfully designed to promote a gradual buildup of independence for children. By allowing parents to stay when needed, we build trust and familiarity, empowering the child to explore and interact with the world around them confidently.

If you choose to stay on the farm, please observe the following rules and requests:

- We are not permitted to enter the work-areas of the barns, or touch and climb on any farm equipment.

- We often feed the goats or chickens, but please be sure to ask a teacher before doing so.
- Please encourage your child to follow directions, engage with the teachers and their classmates, and participate in activities.

For parents who opt for drop-off, rest assured that our caring and trained staff will provide personalized attention and support to ensure your child feels secure and engaged throughout the class. Please communicate directly with your child's teacher about their needs, interests, any concerns they may have, or to develop a plan to assist with drop off. This valuable information helps us tailor our activities to match each child's individuality.

At Wild Sprouts, we see parents as our partners in their child's learning journey. We believe that by working together, we can create a positive and enriching experience that nurtures your child's curiosity, creativity, and love for nature. Whether you choose to stay or drop off, we welcome you and your child with open arms, ready to embark on a wondrous adventure of exploration and discovery amidst the wonders of the great outdoors.

## Positive Learning Environment

At Wild Sprouts, we are committed to fostering a positive and nurturing learning environment that lays the foundation for your child's holistic development. Our approach is centered around creating a space where children feel valued, respected, and supported as they embark on their educational journey.

Key aspects of our positive learning environment include:

- **Nature as a Classroom:** Our outdoor classroom provides a stimulating and inspiring setting for children to learn and grow. Surrounded by the beauty of nature, children have the freedom to explore, discover, and engage with the world around them. We believe that nature offers a unique and invaluable learning experience that stimulates curiosity, creativity, and a sense of wonder.
- **Encouraging Social-Emotional Development:** We place a strong emphasis on social-emotional learning, recognizing that a child's emotional well-being is fundamental to their overall growth. Through activities that encourage teamwork, communication, and empathy, we aim to develop confident, compassionate, and emotionally resilient individuals.
- **Child-Centered Approach:** At Wild Sprouts, we celebrate the individuality of each child. Our curriculum is designed to be flexible and adaptive, allowing us to

cater to the diverse interests and learning styles of our young learners. By observing and understanding their unique qualities, we create personalized learning experiences that nurture their passions and strengths.

- **Positive Reinforcement:** We believe in the power of positive reinforcement to encourage and motivate children. Our teachers use praise, encouragement, and acknowledgment of achievements to boost self-esteem and foster a love for learning. By celebrating the small victories, we instill in our students a sense of accomplishment and a desire to take on new challenges.
- **Safe and Supportive Community:** Wild Sprouts is a close-knit community of parents, teachers, and children. We actively promote a culture of inclusivity and kindness, where everyone feels welcomed and appreciated. This sense of belonging fosters a strong support system for both children and their families.
- **Emphasis on Play:** Play is a fundamental aspect of early childhood development. We integrate play-based learning into our activities, allowing children to learn through hands-on experiences and meaningful interactions. Play not only sparks creativity and imagination but also enhances cognitive, physical, and social skills.
- **Teacher as Facilitator:** Our teachers act as facilitators of learning, guiding children through their discoveries rather than simply providing information. By encouraging questions and critical thinking, we empower children to become active participants in their own learning process.

We are committed to creating an atmosphere where curiosity thrives, confidence soars, and a love for learning flourishes. With the wonders of nature as our backdrop, we strive to cultivate a positive learning environment that nurtures the potential within each child, setting the stage for a lifetime of exploration and growth.

## **Class Behavior Expectations**

We believe in fostering a respectful, safe, and inclusive learning environment for all our young adventurers. Our behavior expectations are thoughtfully designed to encourage positive interactions, cultivate good manners, and promote a sense of responsibility among our students. By setting clear guidelines, we create a harmonious and enriching experience for every child.

- **Respect for Nature:** We instill in our students a deep respect and appreciation for the natural world. Children are encouraged to explore and interact with nature in a gentle and caring manner, understanding that plants, animals, and natural spaces are to be treated with kindness and consideration.

- **Kindness and Empathy:** We emphasize the importance of kindness and empathy in all interactions. Our teachers model these values, encouraging children to treat their peers with compassion and understanding. We celebrate acts of kindness, helping children develop a strong sense of empathy and connection with others.
- **Listening and Following Directions:** Active listening is a crucial skill for learning and cooperation. We teach children the importance of attentive listening and following instructions from teachers and classmates. By honing this skill, children become effective learners and collaborators.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Conflict is a natural part of human interaction. At Wild Sprouts, we teach children age-appropriate conflict resolution strategies, such as using words to express feelings and seeking help from teachers when needed. Through these skills, children learn to navigate challenges and build positive relationships.
- **Respecting Boundaries:** We promote the concept of personal space and boundaries to create a respectful environment. Children learn to recognize and honor each other's boundaries, fostering a sense of autonomy and mutual respect.
- **Responsible Stewardship:** As caretakers of the environment, we teach children the importance of being responsible stewards of our natural spaces. Children are encouraged to clean up after themselves and care for the outdoor areas we explore, nurturing a sense of ownership and pride.
- **Positive Language and Communication:** Encouraging positive and constructive language is a core aspect of our behavior expectations. We teach children to use words to express their needs and feelings while avoiding hurtful or negative language.
- **Appreciating Diversity:** Wild Sprouts is a place of diversity, where children come from various backgrounds and cultures. We celebrate this diversity and teach children to embrace differences, promoting an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for all.
- **Safe Exploration:** Safety is paramount in our outdoor classroom. Children are taught how to explore nature safely, being mindful of potential hazards and following safety guidelines during our outdoor adventures.
- **Gratitude and Appreciation:** We foster a sense of gratitude and appreciation for the opportunities and experiences provided by the natural world. Through thankfulness, children develop a deeper connection to the environment and the people around them.
- **Ability to Transition between Activities:** In an effort to explore nature, our activities take place all over the farm. Children are required to move between activities, stay with the group, and follow teacher directions.

Our behavior expectations are designed to create a positive and supportive learning environment, where children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. By cultivating a culture of respect, kindness, and responsibility, we empower our young learners to become confident, compassionate, and responsible individuals who will make a positive impact on the world around them.

Should your child be involved in any incidents at school, details of that incident will be posted in Brightwheel. The teacher will briefly speak to you during pickup about the incident, your child's role, and plans to mitigate future incidents. If you would like to have an in-depth discussion or meeting about the Incident Report, please schedule a time to talk with the teacher outside of drop off or pick up. If it becomes a reoccurring issue, a teacher will communicate with you to come up with an individualized action plan. If the behaviors do not resolve within a reasonable amount of time, a student may be asked to leave the program in order to keep the other students safe.

## **Requirement of Respectful and Safe Behavior**

Wild Sprouts expects everyone to be respectful of all children, families, and staff in our program. Wild Sprouts reserves the right to disenroll any family at any time without notice for any of the following behaviors.

- Use of inappropriate language towards or in front of staff, families, or children
- Yelling
- Physical harm or intimidating behavior
- Threatening or intimidating language
- Harassment, including in person and online
- Gossiping about other children, staff, or parents
- Any activity or conversations that impede creating a positive and loving learning environment for all Wild Sprouts children, families, and staff

These, as well as other unacceptable activities, will be documented in Brightwheel. If they continue to occur, teachers will communicate with parents to establish a plan of action to address these behaviors. If behavioral challenges continue, the child will be removed from the program.



# Behavior Support Practices and Procedures

## Overview:

- Staff will actively supervise every child on an individualized level of care within reasonable accommodation. We cannot provide constant 1:1 support.
- We do not have physical barriers or fences everywhere; therefore, elopement is a bigger challenge than in most other settings. Children MUST be able to stay with their group, follow teacher direction, and stay within stated boundaries.
- If a child's behavior becomes routinely disruptive to the experience of the other children, the parents may be called to pick up the child for the remainder of the day. A parent or guardian meeting will be requested to create an individualized behavior plan for the child.

## Behavior Support Plan:

- We strive to create an open, trusting relationship with families that welcomes communication between parents and staff regarding their child's experiences at Wild Sprouts. If a child's behavior is interfering negatively with the functioning of the program or the safety of others, we will notify the parent or guardian to set up a meeting with the director and lead teacher. Staff will work cooperatively with families to develop and implement strategies to provide extra support by creating a behavior support plan.
- If it is decided that Wild Sprouts cannot reasonably accommodate the child's support needs, the family may be asked to withdraw the child from the program. A transition meeting will be held to support the family in finding other placement options for the child.

# Class Cancellation and Inclement Weather Policy

We prioritize the safety and well-being of our students and staff above all else. In the event of inclement weather, we closely follow the guidelines set forth by Frederick County Public Schools for class cancellations and delays. Our commitment is to provide a safe learning environment for your child, and we understand the importance of making decisions that prioritize their safety.

- **Weather Cancellations:** Wild Sprouts will follow the Frederick County Public School policy and closures for snow and inclement weather. We will also consider Washington county closures, given that our location is located in Washington County. We reserve the right to use our discretion for additional closures, factoring in rain, snow, wind, etc. For example, if it's cloudy and windy with a high of 32 degrees, classes will be canceled that day. This is required to

ensure everyone's safety given the outdoor nature of our program with full exposure to the elements. All weather-related delays and cancellations will be communicated through Brightwheel.

- **Safety-Related Closures:** At Wild Sprouts, ensuring the safety of our children and staff is our top priority. In addition to weather-related cancellations, we may close or delay classes due to other safety concerns, including hazardous road conditions, power outages, environmental hazards, or excessive or aggressive wildlife, such as wasps. Given our outdoor environment, we must take precautions whenever conditions pose a risk to the well-being of our community. All safety-related delays and closures will be communicated through Brightwheel to keep families informed promptly.
- **Weather Delay Hours:** In the event of a weather delay, our Wild Sprouts' hours will be adjusted. Classes will begin at 11:00 AM and conclude at 1:30 PM. For days with weather delays, we kindly request that parents pack a healthy and nut-free lunch for their child instead of a snack.
- **Open Communication:** In case of any weather-related concerns or questions, we encourage you to reach out to us at any time. Our team will be available to address your inquiries and provide updates promptly.
- **Understanding and Support:** We understand that weather-related disruptions can be challenging for families, and we greatly appreciate your understanding and support during such instances. As an outdoor nature school, we are committed to fostering a connection with nature, even in varying weather conditions. We encourage your child to come prepared with appropriate clothing for outdoor exploration and learning.

## Monthly Payments and Brightwheel

We are dedicated to providing an exceptional nature-based educational experience for your child. To make our fees more manageable for families, we offer convenient monthly payment options through our secure and user-friendly platform, Brightwheel. Below, you will find essential information regarding monthly fees and how to manage payments seamlessly.

- **Monthly Fees:** Our monthly fees cover your child's enriching experiences, engaging outdoor activities, and access to our experienced educators in our unique outdoor classroom setting.
- **Annual Enrollment and Administrative Fee:** The annual enrollment and administrative fee of \$150 helps cover essential operational costs, including administrative expenses and the maintenance of our unique outdoor classroom. This one-time fee, collected at the beginning of each year, ensures your child's

participation in all the enriching activities and experiences offered at Wild Sprouts.

- **Brightwheel - Seamless Payment Management:** Wild Sprouts utilizes Brightwheel, an efficient and secure platform, for managing monthly payments. With Brightwheel, you can easily make payments through various methods, including credit/debit cards, electronic bank transfers, or other options available through the platform.
- **Financial Transparency:** At Wild Sprouts, we believe in transparency when it comes to financial matters. Through Brightwheel, you will have clear visibility of your monthly invoices, payment due dates, and payment history. Should you have any questions or require clarification about your child's monthly fees or payment process, our administrative team is always ready to assist you.
- **Scholarships and Financial Assistance:** Wild Sprouts is in the process of becoming a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Once that is established, we plan to offer scholarship opportunities or financial assistance programs to eligible families who may need support to enroll their child in our nature-based preschool classes. If you are interested in learning more about our scholarship options once they are available, please reach out to us to discuss your unique circumstances.
- **Investing in Your Child's Future:** By enrolling your child at Wild Sprouts, you are making an investment in their future. Our nature-inspired curriculum, experienced educators, and engaging outdoor activities lay a strong foundation for their academic, social, and emotional growth.
- **Partnership in Learning:** We view our relationship with parents and caregivers as a partnership in your child's education. Together, we create an enriching and supportive learning environment that fosters a love for exploration, curiosity, and a lifelong passion for learning.
- **Secure and Confidential Transactions:** Rest assured that all financial transactions and personal information shared with us through Brightwheel are handled with the utmost security and confidentiality. Your trust is essential to us, and we take every precaution to protect your privacy.

We understand that financial considerations are an essential aspect of your decision to enroll your child in Wild Sprouts classes. Our commitment is to deliver unparalleled educational experiences while ensuring transparency, affordability, and accessibility for all families. If you have any questions about monthly fees, payment options, or how to use Brightwheel for seamless payment management, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are here to support you in providing the best possible educational journey for your child.

## Parent Responsibilities

We believe that parents play a vital role in nurturing their child's love for learning and fostering a deeper connection with the natural world. We encourage parents to engage in their child's educational journey and take an active role in creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Below are some ways parents can contribute to their child's growth and development at Wild Sprouts:

- **Cultivate a Positive Attitude Toward Learning:** Show enthusiasm and curiosity about the natural world around you. Share stories, books, and experiences that highlight the wonders of nature. By demonstrating a positive attitude toward learning, you inspire your child to embrace their own curiosity and explore new ideas.
- **Support Outdoor Exploration:** Encourage outdoor play and exploration beyond the classroom. Spend time together in nature, whether it's in your backyard, a local park, or on a family hike. Engaging in outdoor activities together fosters a deeper appreciation for the environment and strengthens your child's connection with the natural world.
- **Foster a Love for Reading:** Reading is a gateway to knowledge and imagination. Set aside time for reading together, and create a literacy-rich environment at home with a variety of nature-themed books and materials. Instilling a love for reading will complement the nature-based learning experiences at Wild Sprouts.
- **Pack Nutritious Snacks and Lunches:** As we promote healthy eating habits, ensure your child's snacks and lunches are nutritious, nut-free, and ready to fuel their adventurous day at Wild Sprouts. Remember to pack a filled reusable water bottle to keep them hydrated during outdoor activities.
- **Participate in Parent Observation and Involvement:** Take advantage of opportunities to observe or participate in class activities. Parent involvement not only strengthens the bond between home and school but also allows you to witness firsthand the exciting discoveries your child makes during our nature-based classes.
- **Communicate Openly:** We value open and honest communication with our parents. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to our team. Your insights and feedback are essential in shaping your child's educational experience.
- **Support Environmental Stewardship:** Foster a sense of environmental responsibility by teaching your child the importance of caring for our planet. Engage in eco-friendly practices at home, such as recycling, conserving energy, and minimizing waste. By working together, we instill the values of sustainability and conservation in our young learners.

- **Celebrate Achievements and Milestones:** Acknowledge and celebrate your child's accomplishments and milestones. Whether it's a new discovery in nature or an academic achievement, these moments of celebration further motivate your child's love for learning.
- **Attend Parent-Teacher Meetings and Events:** Stay connected with our educators and participate in parent-teacher meetings and events. These opportunities provide valuable insights into your child's progress and allow us to discuss their unique learning journey.
- **Embrace the Wild Sprouts Philosophy:** Embrace and support the Wild Sprouts philosophy of nature-based education. Encourage your child to embrace the wonders of the natural world, instill a sense of wonder, and develop a lifelong connection to the environment.

By actively engaging in your child's learning experience and supporting their growth, you become an integral part of the Wild Sprouts community. Together, we can inspire the next generation of environmental stewards, creative thinkers, and lifelong learners. Your commitment and involvement play a significant role in shaping your child's educational journey and future success.

## Feedback and Concerns

We value open and transparent communication with parents. Your feedback, questions, and concerns are essential to us as we strive to provide the best possible educational experience for your child. We encourage you to share your thoughts and observations with our team, as this collaboration strengthens our partnership in nurturing your child's growth and development.

- **Open Door Policy:** We maintain an open-door policy to ensure that you feel comfortable discussing any aspect of your child's experience at Wild Sprouts. If you have questions or need clarification on any matter, our team is readily available to assist you.
- **Parent-Teacher Meetings:** We conduct regular parent-teacher meetings to provide updates on your child's progress and share insights into their development. These meetings offer an opportunity for you to discuss your child's achievements, strengths, and areas for growth.
- **Parent Surveys:** Your input is valuable to us, and we periodically send out parent surveys to gather feedback about our programs and services. Your responses help us assess our performance and identify areas where we can further enhance our offerings.
- **Addressing Concerns:** If you have any concerns regarding your child's well-being, learning experiences, or any other aspect of our preschool classes,

please don't hesitate to reach out to our team. We take all concerns seriously and will work with you to find a suitable resolution.

- **Continuous Improvement:** We are committed to continuous improvement, and your feedback is crucial in shaping our programs. Your suggestions and ideas contribute to the ongoing evolution of Wild Sprouts.

Please know that your feedback is highly valued and that we are dedicated to creating a positive and nurturing environment where your child can flourish. We are always here to listen and collaborate with you as we embark on this exciting adventure together, fostering your child's exploration, growth, and love for learning. We're thrilled to be a part of this journey with your family and look forward to watching your child thrive at Wild Sprouts!