

RAINBOW PLAYSCHOOL



PARENT HANDBOOK 2020/2021

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# Rainbow Playschool

WELCOME TO THE RAINBOW PLAYSCHOOL!

We are a play-based childcare center nestled into the foothills of Mt. Tom in Woodstock, Vermont. Our program is built on the essential premise that free play is vital for the healthy development of young children. It is a critical element in all aspects of child growth. All children have the ability to play and through free play children are allowed the freedom to explore, make their own choices, develop greater independence, ignite their curiosity, learn compassion, build resilience and charge their brain.

## GOALS & PHILOSOPHY

The goal of our program is to provide young children with a stimulating and nurturing environment where they can grow and thrive in all areas of development. We provide age appropriate materials and activities in a relaxed and orderly setting. We guide the children to explore, take risks, expand their ideas and knowledge, and progress at their own pace.

## OUR STAFF

We have a devoted staff that work together to assure your child reaches their potential in every area of development. Our teachers meet and surpass the state criteria for Early Childhood Educators and Early Childhood Development. All teachers participate in continuing education and are certified in CPR and first aid.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **COVID- 19 NEW PROCEDURES & SAFETY MEASURES**

#### **DROP OFF & PICK UP**

*Please note this process may take a little longer than our usual drop-off and pick-up, and we recommend that you give yourself a little more time than necessary to account for this.*

**Our new drop-off routine is as such:**

**We will begin accepting children into the center at 8:30 am until further notice.**

The Infant, 1-2 and 2-3 year old rooms will come in from the main parking lot to the right of the building, while those in the Pre-K room will come in from the little parking lot to the left of the building.

Come to the door or fence and the on-site COVID officer will ask a few questions regarding any symptoms of COVID that you or your child may be presenting--this includes a fever of above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, persistent cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, or a loss of taste or smell. They will take your child's temperature with an infrared no-touch thermometer. This information, as well as any symptoms they may be presenting, will be written down.

At this time, you may use our ProCare app to wirelessly sign your child into school.

After this, a member of the staff will bring your child directly to their classroom and their day shall continue as normal!

**Our new pick-up routine is very similar to this:**

Parents and guardians will come to the door or main gate to get their children and belongings. From there you may wirelessly sign your child out with our ProCare app.

Then you're free to go!

**CLASSROOM UPDATES & CHANGES**

We are pleased to share that Rainbow is taking the health and safety of our families and staff very seriously. As such, there have been some changes to the classrooms beyond the above.

**Classrooms**

We are working to keep the classrooms as separate as possible to prevent any spread of germs from one age-group to the other, up to and including the staff who will be remaining in a single classroom through the day. When traveling between areas (as well as between activities) we will ensure plenty of hand-washing and sanitizing to further reduce these risks.

**Stuffedies or Toys from Home**

While we know some children have toys or stuffedies that help them to feel relaxed and happy, we must ask that no toys be brought into the school building to prevent the spread of germs to or from Rainbow. This includes blankets.

**Large Backpacks**

Like with the stuffies and toys, we ask that large backpacks be kept at home. Large, soft items going between home and Rainbow can transfer germs, and we want to avoid as much potential cross-contamination as possible. Extra clothing and shoes will remain in the school building in the child's cubby.

### **Toys**

We have taken additional measurements to ensure the cleanliness of our toys, which does, unfortunately, mean the removal of plush or soft toys from the rooms that are harder to sanitize, but we promise to still provide a fun, safe, and exciting play environment for everyone despite this!

### **Face Masks**

Staff will be wearing facemasks when in the classroom, and we encourage all children from ages two and up to do so as well--this includes parents and guardians who come in with their child, so please remember to bring a face-covering when picking up or dropping off!

While we will be encouraging mask use among the children, we understand that not every child will be comfortable with this. Your child will not be asked to leave if they refuse to wear one. We have a multitude of masks we can offer to your child (that will stay at Rainbow and be washed) in all sorts of fun colors and patterns, but if they have their own you are welcome to bring them in!

Masks do not need to be worn while we're outside, and we are going to try to be outside as much as possible, so we hope that will relieve some of the discomfort a child may feel from wearing their mask.

### **Playground**

We are separating our playground into three areas. One area for the infants off of the infant room is already separated. There will also be a section of the large playground roped off for 1- 2 year old classroom. The remainder of the playground will include the 2 year old classroom through PreK. We have disinfectant that will be applied after each use that will air dry on the equipment.

### **Social Distancing**

We are following the State regulations, which suggest that keeping children in pods of 25 is considered best practice. For mealtime, napkins and silverware are provided directly by staff. We practice physical distancing when children are awaiting to receive their meals and also when they are waiting in lines. We practice setting up activities 6 feet apart to the best extent possible. Each classroom has their own heating and cooling system to increase fresh airflow

into each classroom without it going through a whole building ventilation system. Each classroom is using their own bathroom as well.

WHAT TO BRING EACH DAY: Your child should always bring a bag to school each day. The bag should include lunch and also bring a complete change of season appropriate clothes down to the socks. If it is snow boot/rainboot weather, your child should bring slippers or shoes for indoor wear. Check for fit of clothes often and replace after use.

CLOTHES: your child should come to Playschool dressed for indoor (possibly messy) play and prepared for outdoor play. Please plan for your children to come home with evidence of what they did that day on their clothes. They will get dirty and while we try to use smocks, washable paints, markers and other supplies, even they stain from time to time. Keep dress-up clothes and party shoes at home except for special occasions. Special clothes keep children from playing freely.

**In the summer**, make sure your child is dressed for the heat, including light clothes and shoes they can walk in. Please send a sun hat and apply sunscreen before bringing your child to school. We will assume this has been done. For optimum sun protection dress your child in light weight long sleeve and legged clothing that covers sensitive skin.

**Sunscreen - It is required that we have written permission to re-apply sunscreen when needed. Send non-aerosol sunscreen in for your child with their name clearly written on the package and sign a permission form.**

**In the winter** dress your child in appropriate indoor clothes. Winter outdoor wear should always include coat and snow pants (or snowsuit), hat, mittens (make sure they are warm). You should assume your child will spend some time outdoors every day. Please label all clothing, especially (hats and mittens) with your child's name!

Choose clothes your child can learn to put on and take off. Zippers, buttons, and closings should work for small learning hands. Velcro is great!

SNACKS: We provide snacks mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Snacks consist of a wide variety of foods such as unprocessed cheese, whole grain and other crackers, cereals, raisins, popcorn (if age appropriate), fruit of all kinds, muffins, and breads. We will make sure your child does not eat anything that is limited or forbidden on his/her application.

LUNCHES: We eat lunch from about 11:45 to 12:15. If your child only comes to Rainbow in the afternoon, he should have eaten before arriving. Your child should bring a simple lunch if he is with us for the morning or all day. Lunches

should include 2 or 3 parts. Please send finger food in preference to spoon or fork food, especially if your child cannot reliably get spoon to mouth. One part might be a sandwich, chicken bits, crackers and cheese, pasta with a sprinkle of cheese, tofu bits or the like. A second part might be a piece of fruit; vegetable sticks with dip, yogurt or applesauce. **Please send all food ready to eat i.e. apples peeled and cut up, oranges peeled and sectioned etc.** Make sure that anything you send in pop-top containers leaves no sharp edges or lids. We are happy to do warmups such as soup, macaroni and cheese or spaghetti. Please send these items in ready- to- eat containers. We try to send uneaten food home so that you can see what your child is eating. Children's appetites vary enormously over time. Try to adjust what you send accordingly. We provide the drinks. We ask that you send balanced healthy food from the basic food groups. This aids in proper brain and body development. We do not allow soda or candy in lunches. We discourage "Lunchables".

Rainbow in general is not nut free however, if a child joins or population who has a severe allergy and it is determined by the director to be high risk, we will activate a ban on certain foods in the building. **\*AT PRESENT, WE ARE NUT FREE!**

REST: Rest time at Rainbow is a learning opportunity – part of developing the physical aspect of the whole child. Children are taught rest and relaxation techniques. This relieves stress, rejuvenates the child and provides them important processing time. Children lie down on their own mat and relax for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes if the child has not fallen asleep, we will move them to a "Quiet activity area" where they will be offered a choice of activities. Sleeping children will be allowed to sleep and wake naturally.

If your child needs to be awakened after a specific amount of time, please discuss this with his teachers.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE: We believe that positive reinforcement works the best with young children. Our teachers are aware of the importance of respecting and validating children's feelings, because it is only in this way that children learn to trust their feelings. Our job is to allow them to find acceptable outlets for showing their feelings. We encourage verbal expressions ("when she takes the truck from me, I feel angry"), and we provide appropriate physical outlets, (running, playing with water, dramatic play, pounding clay, punching bags). When we acknowledge the validity of children's feelings, we give them the tools to develop inner strength and self-confidence to trust and be in touch with their own feelings. Ultimately, this will allow him to have compassion for others as well.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION: We offer conferences to parents twice a year, and talk daily with parents about children's progress, triumphs, and troubles. If you want to speak to your child's teacher about any concerns involving your child, a conference can be arranged at any time. When requested parents of toddlers receive short written reports of daily behavior, particularly at the beginning of the school year. When speaking with teachers regarding your child, please do so out of children's hearing range. Children understand far more language than they can use themselves. Your conversation with your child's teacher may worry your child, even if he/she isn't able to tell you so. You may want to set up a convenient time to telephone your child's teacher for an extended conversation.

CONTRACTS AND SCHEDULING: We renew contracts for each year. Summer and fall contracts and schedules are done simultaneously in order to guarantee fall placement. A child must be scheduled for a minimum of two half days per week in order to establish reasonable continuity and a bond with teachers and peers.

#### IMPORTANT REMINDERS ABOUT PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF POLICY

**We need your cooperation** to help us make early morning, mid-day, and end-of-the-day less crowded and confusing. These transition times are important to the children and when they do not work smoothly, we all lose out.

**8:30 drop off:** We are prepared to take your children at 8:30 each morning. Please give us a courtesy call if you are running late or are not coming in. **Please refer to the highlighted covid details above around drop off and pick up.**

**Everyone is expected to wash their hands and the hands of their child upon entry to the building.**

**1:00 pick up** your half day child no later than 1:00. Please make every effort to be on time. You will be responsible for your child upon your arrival.

**1:00 drop off** Bring your afternoon child to school at 1:00pm, but not before.

**4:30 pickup:** pick up your full day children between 4:15 and 4:30. Once you arrive you are responsible for your child.

**Late pick- up** will result in our imposing a \$1.00 a minute late fee.



**Closings:** We rarely close due to weather conditions; however, Rainbow may be closed for bad weather at the program director's discretion. If school must cancel, have a delayed opening or needs to close early, we will email and send a message through procare to everyone with as much advance notice as possible. Parents are responsible for making judgment on the road conditions and safety of the roads they travel on. Please call the school if you decide not to attend.

### **HOLIDAY CLOSINGS**

**Please cross-reference Rainbow's closing days with your Public-School Calendar.**

Rainbow will be closed on the following holidays:

President's Day Monday  
Memorial Day Monday  
Independence Day (will be announced)  
Labor Day  
Indigenous Peoples Day  
Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday)  
Winter holiday break (7 days) (will be announced)

We will be closed for staff inservice days:  
the two days before the summer and the fall terms begin

Specific dates of scheduled closings and special days to remember are also posted for your convenience website at [www.rainbowplayschool.org](http://www.rainbowplayschool.org)

### **IMPORTANT RULES AND PROCEDURES**

1. Only people listed on your child's application may pick up your child from school. Exceptions are made with a note dated and signed by a custodial parent, or a phone call from a custodial parent, or an email or message in procare. People who the staff do not recognize must be able to produce a positive picture ID. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.
2. If you are divorced, separated, and/or are protected by a restraining order, the school requires a copy of the order or custody agreement for its files in order to enforce either one. We can only enforce orders of which we have a copy. Your verbal assurance that an order exists is not sufficient. We cannot keep a child from leaving with a parent without a copy of the written court order.

3. If a parent/guardian or designated pick-up person is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol/drugs, the child's teacher and/or Program Director will call the individual aside to discuss the suspected condition and potential danger to the child. Personnel will offer to call a spouse, friend or taxi for the individual. If this is ineffective, personnel will notify the police to report their concerns about the welfare of the child and will assist the police as requested
4. We ask families to launder their child's nap mat blankets and pillows weekly. These items should be taken home on the last weekday of your child's attendance and returned the first day of the following week.
5. We will celebrate your child's birthday by singing, "Happy Birthday" at snack or lunch. **Due to covid we must ask that you not send in birthday treats.** Please call or send invitations to any home parties. Do not pass them out in school. Feelings of left out children, no matter what their age, may be hurtful.

#### HEALTH CARE POLICY

If your child is ill, do not send him to school. We work hard to limit the spread of communicable disease among our children. Your help is critical in keeping your child and his Rainbow friends healthy. We reserve the right to send a sick child home. If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you so you can make arrangements to pick them up.

CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD CONTRACTS A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE (i.e. strep throat, impetigo, chicken pox etc.) so that we may alert the staff and other parents.

Children who are being treated with antibiotics must remain at home a minimum of 24 hours after the beginning of treatment, before returning to school. For contagious illnesses, we require a doctor's okay before your child may return to school. Children who have chickenpox may not return to school until all the spots have scabbed over, and no new ones are appearing.

Children must be fever, diarrhea and vomiting free, without the aid of such medications as Tylenol or Motrin, for a full 24 hours before returning to school.

**\*See updated covid regulations on our website for specific information regarding procedures at Rainbow during these unusual times:**  
<https://www.rainbowplayschool.org/2020/07/24/covid-19-and-fall-semester/>

In accordance with Vermont Child Care Program Licensing Rules, every child must have an up to date physical and immunization record on file within 45 days of enrollment. Thereafter, physical records must be updated annually.

### **Administration and Storage of Medication**

*Medication should always be given by parent at home when possible. If we are not comfortable administering medication, parents will be asked to come in to administer medicine to their child.*

- Prescription Medication for Children:

When prescription medicine is to be administered to a child, the medication must be presented in the original bottle with a label affixed by the pharmacy or physician showing the child's first and last name, the dosage and schedule of administration, what the prescription contains, the date purchased and the physician's name. In addition, a medical authorization form must be signed by the parent/guardian in each case.

- Non-Prescription Medication for Children:

When non-prescription medicine is to be administered to a child, it must be accompanied by a medical authorization form signed by the parent or guardian. The medication must be in the original packaging where warnings, side effects and dosages can be checked and reviewed with the parent/guardian. This includes any homeopathic treatments.

- Topical Non-Prescription Medication:

Topical non-prescription medications such as sunscreen, diaper cream, petroleum jelly or other ointments may be applied to a child only with written parental authorization via a signed consent form. This form must be renewed annually.

We do not call parents/guardians for minor scrapes, but we will inform you of any incident for which we use our first aid supplies.

911 will be called for a child needing emergency treatment. The parent/guardian will be notified immediately. Whenever possible a staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance or to hospital until the parent arrives. (Exceptions may include injuries to more than one child or to the staff.)

## FEE SCHEDULE AND CHARGES

### UNDER 2 YEARS OLD

\$65 Full Day

UNDER 2 YEARS – HALF DAY

\$48 Mornings / \$35 Afternoons

OVER 2 YEARS OLD

\$55 Full Day

OVER 2 YEARS – HALF DAY

\$38 Mornings / \$25 Afternoons

Activity/supply fee \$80.00 this will be posted on your September billing.  
(One-time fee each year)

1. Rainbow requires a deposit, in the amount of two weeks of tuition, upon signing your contract. The deposit is refundable with one-month notice before withdrawing or moving on to another school. The deposit is not refundable if you break the terms of the contract, or if your child enrolls, but never attends. You also lose the deposit if your child is a current student who we are holding a space for the following session, and they do not attend.

2. Payments are due the first of each month prior to attendance. If you absolutely must break down payment to weekly and bi-weekly, arrangements should be made with the program director. Weekly and biweekly payments are due in advance of attendance. Monthly payments are due on the first of the month. Payments made after that time will incur an 18% finance fee. If your bill remains unpaid at month's end, we will require you to withdraw your child until payment has been made in full at which time your child may return if the vacancy has not been filled.

3. We provide credit for days missed ONLY under the following circumstances:

\* Holidays Rainbow is closed. You will receive a list and reminders will be posted.

\* Forced school closing: (weather, plumbing etc.) everyone will receive full credit.

4. Picking up late either mid-day or end of day will result in a \$1.00 a minute late charge

5. A \$25.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

6. We strive to keep fees reasonable. When operating expenses increase we are forced to raise our fees. We will post a 30-day notice when a raise in fees is necessary. This is usually a 3-5% increase.

7. The rate will be changed on your child's second birthday and reflected on that month's invoice.

### PRESCHOOL AT RAINBOW

(Child must be at least 3 years of age on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>)

As a pre-qualified preschool, Rainbow Playschool does not charge you for the 10 hours per week, 35 weeks of Prekindergarten; however, time beyond this allotment is your responsibility.

Our preschool program works to incorporate the goals of our program, the Vermont Early Learning Standards as well as implementing an increasingly formal structure that will encourage the development of skills appropriate for a child's eventual entry into kindergarten.

We use monthly themes (safety, taking care of our earth, creepy crawlers, for example) as well as seasonal and holiday themes to encourage development in all areas. We are beginning to incorporate more outdoor education as part of our outdoor curriculum. Stay tuned for more information on our website about this exciting addition!

Below, we have listed a comprehensive, but not exhaustive group of various skills, which we work to help our children begin to master:

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL: developing a sense of self-worth and value which we implement through exploring ideas and questions; seeing their work as important; realizing that all people matter and appreciating differences. Learning to associate with adults and other children in a positive and caring manner which we implement through including them in the rule-making process, establishing limits, helping them take responsibility for their actions, self regulating their own behavior, taking turns, respecting others' feelings, developing empathy, learning that our feelings matter and when it is or is not appropriate to act on them; taking responsibility for materials.

PRE-MATH SKILLS: are encouraged through counting in sequence, counting objects, distinguishing between numbers and other symbols, recognizing numbers and knowing their names, ordering numbers, matching amount with numeral, and simple addition.

COLOR SKILLS: are encouraged through art activities, games, environmental color awareness and discrimination.

PRE-READING SKILLS: are encouraged through reading a great deal to our children, and allowing them to read along in a book, beginning to recognize their own name and names of friends and family, learning the alphabet, labeling, rhyming, recognizing sounds of letters, recognizing simple words.

PRE-SCIENCE SKILLS: we encourage through cooking, experiments, nature observation, seasonal observation, weather, environment, and learning about our own bodies. We want the children to be curious, investigate, express wonder, and enjoy discovering!

LANGUAGE SKILLS: we encourage through dramatic play, conversation, questioning, verbalizing wants and needs, listening, following directions, books music rhyming and reading, dictating individual and group stories, experience charts done after events, exposure to new words.

SENSE OF AWARENESS SKILLS: we encourage through visual (smaller/larger, taller/shorter, narrow/wide), hearing (sounds: near/far, music: high/low), taste (sweet/sour, chewy/liquid, salty/bland, bitter/sweet), smell (variety of scents); touch (rough/smooth, heavy/light, warm/cold).

SMALL MOTOR SKILLS: which we encourage through art: painting, drawing, pasting, paper mache, tearing, folding, and cutting paper; pouring and sorting: rice, water, beans, sand, buttons etc.

LARGE MOTOR SKILLS: we encourage through sweeping raking, field trips, games which include, running, jumping, climbing, Yoga, Play equipment for riding, swinging, digging climbing, and balance, lots of outside play.

SELF HELP: zippers, buttons, laces, snaps, Velcro, buckles, ties, handwashing; setting and washing table, taking care of belongings, special jobs.

**Approaches to Learning:** We encourage emergent learning through hands on activities and experimentation. Teachers play, model, and engage with children by scaffolding their interests, learning styles and abilities, developing the environment around early learning standards and active learning.

**Social and Emotional Development:** Children develop a sense of self- worth and value through exploring ideas and questions; seeing their work as important; realizing that all people matter. Teachers support problem solving and conflict resolution. Mutual respect is modeled and supported. Large and small group activities are used to practice cooperation and sharing. Our tools include books, games, toys, puppets, dramatic play and an intentionally designed environment.

**Language, Literacy, and Communication:** is encouraged through dramatic play, conversation, questioning, verbalizing wants and needs, listening, following directions, music, rhyming and reading and writing.

**Mathematics:** Pre math skills such as counting, number recognition, shapes, measuring, patterning and sequencing are encouraged using cooking, games, blocks, sequence cards and manipulative materials.

**Science:** Is learned through cooking, experiments, nature observation, seasonal observation, weather, and environment. We hypothesize, develop theories, and problem solve using books, natural materials, publications, observation equipment, and tools of measurement.

**Social Studies:** involve learning about us, our families and our heritage. We study world culture and customs using books, publications, pictures, costumes, and food. Themes and studies are incorporated into dramatic play, music, dance, cooking and arts and crafts.

**Creative Expression** is experienced and enhanced through music, movement and dance, art media, crafts, display of artwork, theatrics experiences and activities.

**Physical Health & Development** is promoted through healthy lifestyle practice such as: hand washing, personal hygiene, serving and learning about healthy food choices, rest and relaxation techniques, exercise through yoga and movement, outdoor play promoting large motor development and includes area to run, climb, dig, jump, and balance using balls, hoops, wheels, bikes, scooters, beams. Cutting, writing, drawing, gluing, tearing, folding, sorting, and dress-up support fine motor skills.

### Summer at Rainbow

We have a summer contract for your requested schedule during the summer months. If we have space available for drop-in children, we will take only children who have previously attended Rainbow and have completed required paperwork.

Our summer program is conducted in a camp like atmosphere and takes advantage of the outdoors as much as possible. Activities are built around the interests and abilities of the children attending during the current term and include: Field trips, community study, music & movement, Yoga, recreational games, creative arts, literature, drama, blocks & building, science discovery, sensory play (including sand & water), lots & lots of outdoor events and play.



# WELCOME!

*We are happy to have you join us!*

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