



Little Round Schoolhouse

HANDBOOK:
CHILDREN'S GARDEN

INTRODUCTION

The Little Round Schoolhouse is a home-based school program for children ages 3-6.5. The school is situated on our land, located in the beautiful forested Bent Creek area (SW Asheville). We are devoted to providing a quality program that meets the physical, social-emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of young children. We recognize and value the magic of childhood and want to create a space that honors and nurtures our young children.

We draw a great amount of inspiration from the Waldorf model of education. In this model, early childhood education doesn't include any formal academics but sets the foundation for academic learning later in life. We believe that play is the true work of childhood and that learning by doing provides a framework for problem solving and critical thinking, as well as a love for lifelong learning. Our early grades program offers homeschool families an afternoon enrichment opportunity that includes outdoor play and exploration, nature studies, watercolor painting, handwork & crafts, singing, and movement. Children are served natural, nutritious snacks and meals (often made with their help).

We surround our children with simple and natural toys and experiences. We let the children do things directly for themselves, trusting in their natural development and growth.

We are a small school of dedicated teachers with many years experience working with children. We value lifelong learning in ourselves and strive for continual education outside of the classroom.

RHYTHMS

Children live in a world of rhythm—from the rhythm of the breath in their bodies to the rhythm of waking and sleeping with each day. As the year goes through the cycle of the seasons, children are aware of the rhythm of the earth. Children flourish when their lives move to rhythm and find comfort in the routine of daily activities.

With this in mind, our program follows a rhythm of activities. Each day the activities flow with alternating periods of breathing in (quiet moments of story time and circle) and breathing out (active moments of vigorous play and work). For example, in our Children's Garden, the morning begins with a period of creative play and circle time. After snack, children go outside for free play then quiet down to hear a story. All transitions are graced with song. In our early grades program, we will begin with free play then move into a focused activity and then end our day with a walk in the forest and a story.

Themes and activities follow the greater rhythms of nature, connecting the child's daily classroom experience with the cycles of the greater world.

A DAY IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Children's Garden Sample Daily Schedule

9:00-9:10	Drop off time
9:00-9:55	Free play (including offerings of art, cooking, & nature-based crafts)
9:55-10:10	Tidy up
10:10-10:20	Circle Time
10:20-10:35	Meal Prep & Hand washing
10:35-10:55	Meal
10:55-12:30	Outside Play (includes free play, crafts, & gardening)
12:30-12:40	Outside tidy up
12:40-12:55	Apple snack & story time
12:55-1:00	Goodbye circle

Beginning the Day

What happens during our school day is affected by how the day begins for your child. By keeping the mornings consistent and providing a protein-filled breakfast, you are helping your child for a day of learning and activity. *We ask that children not be exposed to electronic media in the morning before arrival.* Children need to be dressed for the weather and kept warm on cold days. Child should arrive with a good night's sleep, a warm body, and a full belly.

Morning Arrival

Drop off time is at 9am. Please plan to arrive on time. Late arrivals disrupt our day and are often hard on children. If late arrival is necessary, let us know when possible. To report an absence, call or email us to let us know your child won't be attending.

Afternoon Departure

Our school day ends at 1pm. Weather permitting, we welcome all families to stay for a picnic lunch and community time from 1:00-2:00pm. We ask all families to be packed up and pulled away by 2:10pm. Please gather your child's belongings from the schoolhouse and replace any wet or dirty clothes with clean ones before the next school day.

Late Pick-up Policy

Please strive to be on time. A \$25 late fee is assessed once you are 10 minutes late. This fee is waived once; emergencies excused. We are required under law to have your children for "no more than four hours." Your timeliness is important to the life of our program. Please call us if you know you are going to be late.

SCHOOL MEALS

We will work together each day to prepare a filling, nutritious meal. On Mondays we will eat beans and rice. On Tuesdays we will knead and bake gluten free rolls as well as make a hearty, vegetable-lentil soup.*

You will be asked to *send your child to school with a vegetable every Tuesday* for vegetable soup.

*Our meals may shift slightly depending on allergies and sensitivities.

CLOTHING & DRESS

Our school is a place of hard work and active play. Please select sturdy shoes that are appropriate for outdoor play and are able to withstand the work of your little artist/gardener/creator. We play outside “whatever the weather,” so be sure your child is prepared to play in wind, rain, snow, and sun! Select clothing that is:

- Easy to move in and taken on/off for the bathroom
- Able to withstand dirt, grease, paint, water, etc
- Layered for changeable weather
- *Free from fashion commercial images, media characters, advertising, and writing.*

Essential Little Round Schoolhouse gear to come each day:

- Shoes that are easy to taken on and off
- Water bottle
- Sweater/jacket, warm hat, mittens (when seasonably appropriate)
- long underwear (in colder season)
- Rain boots
- Rain suit OR rain pants & coat
- Slippers
- Canvas bag**

** Please do not bring a backpack to school. Our schoolhouse is too small for backpacks. We will provide you with a canvas bag and ask that your child bring this to school each day.

If you would like your child to wear sunscreen or bug repellent, please apply it before sending your child to school that day.

All toys and stuffed animal should remain at home.

MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY

Our children live in a world saturated with media and commercialization targeted toward children. We believe that children need space and time away from the fast-paced, media-driven world. We encourage all parents to reduce or minimize their child(ren)'s screen time, especially on school days. We also ask that you send your child to school with clothing and belongings (water bottles, lunch boxes, etc) *free of commercial images*. These include movie characters as well as advertisements.

Additionally, we keep a cell phone/device free school. We ask that you step out into the parking lot to take calls or use your device. You are welcome to take photographs of your child. Children may not bring phones or devices to school.

HEALTH

Your child's health is very important to us. As parents, you know your child better than we do and can recognize when your child appears ill. Our lively day is not a soothing environment for a sick child and children should stay home and rest if they are not completely well. It is one of our goals to decrease the amount that illness is spread from one child to another. It is important to keep your child home if he or she has one of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 101° or higher (*or has had one in the previous 24 hours*)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Heavy nasal discharge (severe cold)
- Severe cough
- Vomiting
- Unusual rash
- Diarrhea
- Head lice
- Symptoms associated with a contagious disease (reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, fever)
- Too ill or fatigued to participate in the daily activities of kindergarten

If your child develops any symptoms of illness during the school day, we will contact you to pick up your child. *Please plan to keep your child home for at least 24 hours after symptoms have passed.*

Teachers will administer only emergency medications (for example, those for an asthma attack or an allergic reaction). All medications must be brought in original containers clearly labeled with instructions. Parents must complete paper work with instructions for administering medication.

VISITING THE CLASSROOM

Visitors are welcome when scheduled in advance. Visitors will be given a meaningful task to perform while quietly joining our day. Please remember that adult conversations are held to a minimum as the space is held for the children. Visitors include both parents and perspective parents/children.

If you have a talent or skill you wish to share with us and would like to include the children, please let us know. We enjoy having parents join us!

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate birthdays simply at Little Round Schoolhouse. When your child has a birthday, we will recognize them at snack time with a simple gift and song.

FESTIVALS

The Little Round Schoolhouse marks the rhythm of the year through the celebration of non-religious festivals that focus primarily on nature's changing processes. Children, parents, and teachers come together to prepare for the festivals and learn to work together. Children experience festivals as special, magical experiences and find great joy in the preparation for these events—baking special treats, learning new songs and verses, and decorating the schoolhouse. Festivals are a time for us to step out of normal everyday life and celebrate what is happening in the world around us.

Our festivals will be small gatherings with our own immediate school community. Parents are invited to participate in whatever capacity works best for your family. We will have a few simple jobs for those who would like to volunteer but it is not required.

There are many more rich and beautiful festivals in the Waldorf tradition. We will celebrate three of these festivals together: Apple Festival, also

called "Michaelmas" (end of September), Lantern Walk (mid-November), and May Faire (beginning of May). The Apple Festival and May Faire will be celebrated during a regular school day and the Lantern Walk will be held in the evening in the fall.

General information follows and more specific information about each festival will be provided as the season approaches. Please know that the recognition and celebration of each of these festivals will be different depending on what program your child attends.

Michaelmas/Apple Festival (September 29)

Michaelmas is celebrated during the harvest season. As we move from the long warm days of summer to the cool, shorter days of autumn, we begin to turn inward. The story of Michael battling and overcoming the dragon brings strength as we enter the new season. There are many versions of his bravery, particularly in battling the dragon and defeating the powers of darkness.

In early childhood, we will celebrate a simple apple festival with an apple press to make cider, a warm fire, and stories

Martinmas/the Lantern Walk (November 11)

St. Martin shared his cloak and lantern with a poor beggar outside the king's castle. His story inspires us to let the light inside us burn bright and to share this light and kindness with others. During our Lantern Walk, we gather as the sun is setting around a warm fire. We then light our lanterns and walk with them, singing songs, and feeling our individual lights become shared warmth on a cold night.

*The sunlight fast is dwindling
My little lamp needs kindling.
Its light shines bright on the darkest night.
Dear lantern, guard me with your light.*

May Day (May 1)

This is an ancient festival welcoming the arrival of spring and the change of the seasons. We dance around the may pole, singing spring songs and weaving the ribbons.

DISCIPLINE

The daily rhythm of the classroom will do a great job to minimize conflict, as children know, out of habit, what is expected of them. Teachers model ways of resolving conflicts among the children and teach children the skills they need to learn to solve problems on their own. When necessary, teachers may use a “time in”—a period of time where the child will work with or help an adult until the child is ready to join the classroom activities.

There are certain serious behaviors that might result in a child being asked to leave school. These behaviors include:

- Running away or repeatedly trying to run away
- Intentionally injuring/hurting another person
- Aggressive behavior that results in injury (whether intentional or not)
- Uncontrollable disruptive behavior
- Repeated refusal of adult guidance

In the event of an incident of serious misbehavior and/or injury, teachers will contact the parents and will meet to discuss how to better support the child in the classroom. The parents and teachers will work together to draft a plan that can be addressed both at home and school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the event of inclement weather, The Little Round Schoolhouse will notify families via text and email about the status of school.

TEACHER ILLNESS

As a small, home-based program, there are times when we have to close for teacher/family illness. In the event that one teacher is sick, we will have a substitute fill in. If both the teachers are ill, school will be cancelled and parents will be notified.

MAKING UP MISSED DAYS

We will make up days missed due to inclement weather or teacher sickness after *missing one day*. We will email families to coordinate the best make up date(s).