



WONDERBLOOM NATURE PLAYSCHOOL

**PARENT HANDBOOK
Academic Year 2022-2023**

Updated 2/9/22 SS



CONTACT INFORMATION

Location: Cottonwood Presbyterian Church - SW entrance
1580 Vine Street
Murray, UT 84121

General Inquiries: admin@wonderbloom.org

Director: Lianna Lopez

Phone:

E-mail: lianna.lopez@wonderbloom.org

Exec. Director: Dr. Sarah Stone

Email: sarah.stone@wonderbloom.org

Board of Directors

Tiana Hood, CPA, Board Chair, tiana.hood@menlocap.com Robert Stone, Treasurer, stone.robby@gmail.com Nerissa Spamanato, Secretary, nerissa01@hotmail.com Dr. Rebecca Simmons	Christopher Petersen Simone Flanigan Anna Robbins
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Philosophy

Wonderbloom Nature Playschool is the first nature-based preschool in Salt Lake City. We were inspired by the philosophy of European "Forest Schools," where children spend most of the school time in the outdoors -- learning through interaction with nature. Nature-based learning is increasing in popularity throughout the United States because these types of schools have many benefits - some of which include: reducing obesity, protecting psychological well-being, increasing cognitive skills, increasing positive social skills, and increasing positive attitudes toward nature and the environment. We take a holistic approach to learning by focusing on Mind (developmentally-appropriate school readiness), Body (yoga and nutrition), and Soul (relationships with each other and nature).

History

Several years ago, Dr. Stone learned about the nature-schooling movement when reading about educational styles that had the most positive benefits for children. She became convinced that there was a better way to promote development and learning in young children, and it included rethinking the traditional indoor classroom setting. Stone set out to enroll her own children in a nature preschool, but was shocked to find there were no year-round, nature-focused programs in Salt Lake City. This commitment to her children's education compelled Stone to find a way to bring this ground-breaking methodology to Salt Lake City. Combining her PhD in early childhood development with her 16 years of preschool teaching experience, Dr. Stone established a high-quality early childhood program. She opened Wee Humans in 2017 and converted it to an expanded nonprofit called Almitas Foundation in Fall of 2018. Wonderbloom Nature Playschool is a mission of Almitas Foundation.



Staff



Dr. Sarah Stone – Founder and Exec. Director

Sarah, the founder and Director of Wonderbloom, has a PhD in early childhood development and has spent over 16 years teaching and supervising early childhood programs including Parents As Teachers and Early Head Start. In addition, Sarah has trained in nature-based education approaches. She has incorporated her extensive knowledge of early childhood development with principles of nature-based learning to create the underlying philosophy and structure of Wonderbloom.



Lianna Lopez - Director

Lianna has a degree in Early Childhood and a master's degree in Education. She has over 15 years of experience working in the classroom with young children and families. Lianna's passions include birdwatching, cooking, swimming, hiking, wandering outdoors, and spending time with her infant son. She is super excited to be working with the teachers and is looking forward to getting to know all of our families.



Tenisha Anderson - Supervisor

Tenisha has a passion for seeing children thrive in their own element driven by being outside and exploring everything around them. She has joined Wonderbloom in hopes to help curiosities bloom and to foster a connection with each other, themselves and our ecosystem. Tenisha has Montessori experience, is trained in social emotional competence and inclusion and has her Forest School Leader Training Certificate. She will use her expertise as an urban farmer running an urban garden as well as a community garden at her local mosque, to help our students in the garden!



Bri Matthews - Early Childhood Educator

Born and raised in the beautiful mountains of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Bri learned to love and appreciate the outdoors because her parents encouraged her to explore outside as much as they could. Bri studied environmental studies and education studies at Ithaca College where she graduated in 2018. Her experiences in the environmental and education departments helped her realize that she wanted to pursue a career in environmental education. Bri has been in Salt Lake since 2020 and is in love so far. When she is not working, Bri enjoys playing outside, catching early trams, hiking in the mountains, and traveling all over the world.



Breea Buckley - Early Childhood Educator

After working in childcare for 6 years, all the while earning her Child Development Associate degree, Bree started looking for an early childhood center that would value the whole child and incorporate outdoor learning. She was surprised to find Wonderbloom. She was definitely meant to be at this school and we are so grateful to have her empathetic nature and ingenuity! Breea is constantly looking for ways to enhance our outdoor classroom and engage her students. She regularly reads books for her own personal development and as a teacher.



Grace Tedrick - Early Childhood Educator

Grace is originally from Virginia but moved to Utah in June 2021. She graduated from Virginia Tech where she majored in wildlife conservation. She has a huge passion for conservation, sustainability, and spending time outdoors. Her hobbies include hiking, bird watching, meditation, and yoga. Grace has lots of previous experience with wilderness living skills from being a Wilderness Therapy Field Guide where she worked with female-born adolescents who have neurodivergence.



Daily Schedule

Honeybees AM; M-F 8:30-11:30

8:30 *Drop off and check in*
8:30 Guided Exploration
9:00 Clean up
9:15 Circle Time
9:30 Bathroom and Water Break
9:50 Yoga
10:00 Snack
10:20 Art and free choice
10:45 Clean up
10:50 Bathroom and Water Break
11:10 Guided Exploration
11:25 Clean up
11:30 *Pick Up and check out*

Butterflies PM; M-Th 8:30-11:30

12:30 *Drop Off and check in*
12:30 Homesteading and Guided Exploration
1:00 Clean up
1:15 Circle Time
1:30 Bathroom and Water Break
1:50 Yoga
2:00 Snack
2:20 Art and free choice
2:45 Clean up
2:50 Bathroom and Water Break
3:10 Guided Exploration
3:25 Clean up
3:30 *Pick up and check out*

Dragonflies Full Day; M-Th 8:30-3:30 and F 8:30-12:30

8:30 *Drop off and check in*
8:30 Guided Exploration
9:00 Clean up
9:15 Circle Time
9:30 Bathroom and Water Break
9:50 Yoga
10:00 Snack
10:20 Art and free choice
10:45 Clean up
10:50 Bathroom and Water Break
11:10 Guided Exploration
11:25 Clean up
11:30 Lunch
12:00 Bathroom and get ready for nap/rest
12:15-2:00 Naptime for nappers
 12:15-1:15 Rest
 1:15-2:00 Free choice
2:00 Snack
2:20 Art and free choice
2:45 Clean up
2:50 Bathroom and Water Break
3:10 Guided Exploration
3:25 Clean up
3:30 *Pick up and check out*

We close every Friday at 12:30am. There is no class Friday afternoons.



Calendar

We follow the Granite District Calendar for most holidays and closures.

<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Aug 30 First Day of School	Jan 2 Holiday, No School
Sept 5 Holiday, No School	Jan 13 Teacher Inservice, No Students
Sept 26 Parent Teacher Conference, No Students	Jan 16 Holiday, No School
Oct 13-14 Fall Break, No Students	Feb 17 Teacher Inservice, No Students
Oct 28 Teacher Inservice, No Students	Mar 24 Parent Teacher Conference, No Students
Nov 23 Teacher Inservice, No Students	Mar 27-30 Spring Break, No Students
Nov 24-25 Holiday, No School	May 26 Last Day of School
Dec 20-23 Winter Break, No Students	
Dec 23 Holiday, No School	
Dec 26 Holiday, No School	
Dec 27-30 Winter Break, No Students	

Payment

Auto Pay is required through Brightwheel, our school app. Payments are due on the first of the month for that month's tuition or fees (ie: Payment is due on October 1st for October tuition). A late fee of \$50 will be incurred on the 3rd day of the month after payment is not received. If payment is not completed by the 5th day of the month, the "last month's tuition" will be used and the child's enrollment will end on the last day of the month. If you would like to re-enroll your child, you will be required to pay the tuition-in-full payment for the remainder of the year. A change fee of \$50 will be incurred if you wish to change your child's enrollment (ie: days of week or times of day) after enrollment is finalized with the payment of the enrollment invoice.

Curriculum and Lesson Plans

We base our curriculum around the natural world with lots of hands-on play activities. Your child's classroom schedule and lesson plans are posted on Brightwheel. Please note when your child will be doing certain activities. This will enable you to follow-up with your child regarding what they did at camp.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Children may be dropped off by anyone, but must be picked up by an authorized individual as indicated on the child's enrollment form. Individuals may be required to show photo identification before the school releases a child. It is mandatory that you sign your child in/out of the program on the Brightwheel app each day. Our staff assumes responsibility for your child once they are signed into the program.

Drop-Off Procedure

- A. Come to the Southwest doors; check in begins at 8:20 am (AM and FULL DAY Students) or 12:20 am (PM students). Scan Brightwheel QR code to check child in.



- B. **Check in will cease promptly at 8:40 and 12:40, respectively.** No check-in after these times unless you have been approved in advance by the admin. See below.
- C. Refer to our covid guidelines about masking and distancing. These may change and we will let you know if they do.
- D. Parent/Guardians take child(ren) to the bathroom and wash their hands with soap, even if they don't need to use the toilet. Greet your child's teacher outside then they say a short goodbye.

Pick-Up Procedure

- A. Line up at the exterior gate.
- B. Staff will bring children to the gate. Scan QR Brightwheel code to check child out.
- C. Late pick-up fees will begin promptly 5 minutes after check out time.

Late Arrival & Late Pick-up

Drop-off/Check-in will end promptly at 8:40 am and 12:40 am, respectively. If you contact the director via Brightwheel in advance, we can make exceptions for extenuating circumstances such as a Dr. appointment or car trouble. Pickup/Check-out is at 11:30a for Honeybees AM, 3:30p for Butterflies PM and Dragonflies Full Day, and 12:30p for Dragonflies on Fridays. If you are late for pick-up, the staff may become anxious, because they have other duties to attend to and need to prepare for other arriving children or to close the school at the end of the day. Additionally, if you are late, your child may feel worried and uncomfortable. **Early arrival and late pick-up will result in a \$1.00 per minute fee after an initial warning message.** In the event that a child has not been picked up 10 minutes after the end of class, we will call you. If we are unsuccessful, we will call your emergency contacts.

Late Arrival & Late Pick-up

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Authorization to Release Child

We will only release your child to those individuals listed on the application and we may ask for ID. **We will NOT release a child without written permission - or verbal permission in the case of emergency.** To verify your identity over the phone, staff will call your number listed on the application.

Legal Custody

The center cannot refuse to release a child to the child's parent or legal guardian who has or shares legal custody of the child. In most cases, both parents have equal custody rights, unless a court or valid written separation agreement proves otherwise. If you are experiencing custody difficulties we strongly urge you to keep the center's director fully advised of circumstances that affect your child and their drop off and pick-up routines at the center.



Volunteering

As part of your Contract you agreed to volunteer 3 hours per month in the school (unless you opted out and paid the fee). Having parents/guardians in the classroom helps create stability and continuity for your child, gives you ideas for things to follow-up with at home, and creates a sense of community as you get to know the other children and parents. Each month, we will send a sign-up via email for you to choose which days and times you can volunteer. Volunteer hours must be scheduled in advance and recorded.

Committees

As part of your Enrollment Contract, you agreed to serve on a committee. On the Family Involvement Survey, you indicated your committee preference. You will be contacted about your committee assignment by the committee chair or by the staff if you are the committee chair. Participation is based on parent availability. Time commitments vary, but we anticipate an average of 2 hours per month of participation. More is always appreciated!

Communication

Communication is a critical component of a quality program. We use Brightwheel for messaging, weekly newsletters, photos, alerts and announcements. Parents are expected to contact the teachers or Admin with any questions or concerns immediately as they arise. Parents must have a working email address, phone number, and the Brightwheel app downloaded. Sharing information is not always easy since parents and teachers are busy. If you have a concern or special insight that would help us with your child, please make an effort to visit with your child's teacher, call and leave a message, or message us on Brightwheel. This will make things go smoother for your child, you, and the school.

Communication is a critical component of a quality program. Please watch for announcements through Brightwheel or Email.

Please don't attempt to have these conversations during drop-off or pick-up. Teachers will not be able to devote adequate attention to you during these busy times.

Important Documents

Access important documents such as the calendar and Health and Safety Plan via the ["Current Parents"](#) tab online.

Waitlist

Families already enrolled in the program will be placed at the top of the waitlist for all other classes they are wanting to attend.

Behavior

Discipline/Behavior Guidance

The word 'discipline' comes from the latin word "diciplina" which means instruction or teaching. Positive guidance is rooted in teaching appropriate behaviors to children and helping them understand the consequences of their actions. We proactively teach consequences of actions and empathy for others. We help the child communicate all emotions and redirect the child to another activity when there is a conflict. If a child is harming themselves or other children, we will immediately remove the child from the situation. In order to keep a child



from hurting themselves or others, we may need to use physical interventions, such as momentarily restraining a child.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

At Wonderbloom we strive for an inclusive, learning environment for all children. There are times when children hit, bite, or throw things because they have a lot of emotion and that might be the only way for them to express it. We understand that children are learning boundaries with others and we regularly model appropriate behavior and redirect these misguided behaviors. There may be times that a child is overtly aggressive toward staff or other children that are outside the norm. In order to proactively address these instances and to keep others safe, we will take the following steps:

1. The first instance of an overtly aggressive behavior (causing an injury with a mark on themselves or others, destroying property or an uncontrolled verbal attack), we will alert the parent in writing.
2. After the second instance, we will alert the parent in writing and schedule a parent/teacher conference where we will create an action plan.
3. After the third incident, we will alert the parent in writing, schedule a parent teacher conference and provide referrals for outside services. The child will be placed on temporary leave. The parent has 30 days to contact resources, schedule appointments and follow up with Wonderbloom. We will not charge tuition during this 30 day period. After 30 days or after resources have provided feedback (whichever is sooner), we will hold a parent teacher conference to decide next steps. We may choose to enact a new action plan, which may include an aide for the child. Conversely, we may decide it is best for the child to seek care elsewhere.
4. If after implementing the action plan from the resource/referral service, if there are three more instances of aggressive behavior care will be terminated without the current month's refund.

Transitional Objects

We know that school can be a worrisome place for children if they are not used to the environment without their parent/guardian present. It is normal for children at this age to attach to a special item (blanket, stuffed toy – also known as a transitional object). This object is welcome at school, but it must be labeled with the child's first and last name and it must stay in their cubby during school hours - so they know where to find it when they need a snuggle. It is not the responsibility of the staff or school to keep track of the transitional item. Therefore, it is possible that it could get lost, broken, or played with by other children.

Behavior Concerns:

If a child's teacher notices a pattern of behaviors, which is outside of the norm of development, they will alert the parents about the behaviors and will begin to take notes. These notes will cover what the behavior is, when it is happening, what triggered it, and how long it took to return to the group. Teachers will take these notes over the course of a week then meet with the parent to discuss next steps or if outside intervention is needed.

Health

Clothing

Wonderbloom Nature Playschool is based in an outdoor classroom. As often as possible, we will be outdoors - all year round - in rain, snow, or shine. Dress your child appropriately for the weather (check the



forecast before school). Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that can get dirty or wet. Please pull hair back out of the child's eyes. No jewelry is allowed. Some clothing will need to be left at the center. Please refer to 'What to Bring to School' section.

Nutrition

We are acutely aware that during these early childhood ages, children's bodies and brains are growing exponentially. We have planned nutritious snacks for your child each day. We use locally-sourced and organic ingredients as much as possible. We feed children a variety of tastes and textures. It is important that you prepare your child(ren) each day for the menu. We respect children's preferences and choices, but we encourage them to try foods they may be wary of. Research shows that children are likely to refuse a food up to 15 times before finally trying it. We will continually keep presenting them with a variety of healthy foods and we hope you do too! Please alert the center if your child has any allergies.

Handwashing

Handwashing is the most effective way to inhibit the spread of germs. We wash or sanitize the children's hands upon arrival at school, when coming in from outside, and before and after eating.

Illness

We would like to reduce the spread of illness, so please keep your child home if they are ill. Your child is welcome back to school if they meet the following criteria for at least 24 hours or have been on medication for at least 24 hours:

- o No green or yellow mucus
- o No fever above 102 degrees without the use of fever-reducing medicine
- o No vomiting
- o No diarrhea
- o No persistent cough that interferes with breathing or regular physical activity

We reserve the right to send any child home if they are exhibiting any of those symptoms.

Air Quality/ Extreme Weather

We have an air pollution sensor in our outdoor classroom. We check it at the beginning and middle of each day, or more often if the forecast warrants it. You can check it [here](#). For Green and Yellow air quality, we will have outdoor activity as usual. For Orange air quality, we restrict outdoor activity to under one hour. For Red air quality and above, we will keep children indoors. We follow [these](#) guidelines to know if the temperatures are safe for children to play outdoors. We may limit outdoor learning when temperatures are below 30 degrees and above 90 degrees (in the shade). Teachers are trained to pay attention to the weather and signs from the children to make sure children stay safe outdoors.

Medication

Staff may dispense over-the-counter or prescription medications provided by parents for their children. Prescriptions should be current and clearly labeled with the child's name as well as in the original container. Medicine will be given only if parents/guardians also provide a signed Medication Administration form. Please do not leave medication in bags from home; give them directly to staff members.

Immunizations

If you choose to immunize, your child must be up-to-date on immunizations as required by the Utah Department of Human Services prior to enrollment at Wonderbloom. After admission, you are responsible for regularly updating your child's health files to reflect current immunizations. If you opt out of having your child immunized or are on a delayed schedule, we must have an exemption form from the Department of Health or your physician.

Toilet Competence

We accept children that are not yet competent using the toilet. We understand that children need individualized approaches when learning how to use the toilet. However, using the toilet independently is part of



normal childhood development. If your child cannot yet use the toilet independently we will create a plan with you to help facilitate this.

Safety

Please refer to Wonderbloom's Health and Safety Plan on our website for detailed information about child supervision, health, safety, and emergency procedures.

Incident Report

Every effort is made to keep your child safe; however, children are likely to acquire bumps, bruises, and scratches during their early years. We will fill out an incident report for each incident, accident, or injury. The report is initially completed by the teacher, then signed by the parent/guardian upon pick-up. If the injury is serious, you will be notified by phone. If, in the opinion of Wonderbloom staff on duty, the injury warrants emergency treatment, an ambulance will be called and your child will be taken to the nearest medical facility. You will then be notified immediately. Parents/guardians will be responsible for any costs incurred due to any emergency treatment.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

All staff are mandated reporters and shall report suspected child abuse or neglect. The report shall be made to the program director or director designee IMMEDIATELY. The Director or director designee shall gather information from the staff involved and support the staff to report the suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services. The Director will report to the Board. Any person who witnesses or suspects that a child has been subjected to abuse, neglect, or exploitation shall immediately notify Child Protective Services or law enforcement. The preschool staff shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect. Staff may discuss the report with families after the report has been made.

Access to building

The school is housed in the Cottonwood Presbyterian Church. Much of the building is used for purposes other than the school. Therefore, parents/guardians or visitors are not allowed to access areas other than those used by the school. In return, those working in or visiting the church will not have unaccompanied access to the preschool unless they have passed the Childcare Licensing background check and are approved by the director. Doors to the school are locked at all times and there are security cameras around the premises. If you are accessing the school outside of the drop-off and pick-up times, please ring the white doorbell at the school entrances.

Background checks/Name tag

Anyone with access to the children will have current background checks. All visitors and volunteers are required to check-in with the Director and wear a name tag. No visitor or volunteer is allowed alone with a child unless they have a current background check. Law enforcement personnel are exempt as long as they have correct identification.

Diversity/Inclusion

We welcome every opportunity to expand the children's view of the world as a place rich in many cultures, races, religions and customs. Wonderbloom Nature Playschool is open to all families, regardless of ethnicity, religion, ability, and sexual orientation. We will work with families to provide an inclusive preschool environment for all children. Diversity extends to the family structure as well, and we are committed to the



philosophy of treating all family situations equally and without bias. Though we rent space from the Cathedral Church of St. Mark, we are not affiliated with the church or the Episcopal Diocese of Utah. Wonderbloom is a non-denominational program; therefore, religious holidays are not celebrated specifically, but we may celebrate the spirit and intention of the holiday (ie: during Christmastime we will celebrate generosity). We encourage you to share your family's traditions with our children and staff.

Holidays

Holidays are a joyous time for celebration. Rather than celebrating the traditional American holidays (Halloween, Christmas, etc), we will focus on the seasons and celebrate the changes we see in nature. We respect children's enthusiasm for sharing their thoughts with us about holidays, but we will not explicitly promote any specific holiday.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a wonderful milestone for children and we will find a special time either on or around your child's birthday to celebrate them as an individual. If you want to bring something to give to the class, please consider a hand-drawn picture or craft, rather than edible treats.

Special Needs

Some children have special needs that require unique adaptation or attention by staff and teachers. We welcome children with all abilities, backgrounds, and medical situations. There is accessible parking, doors, and bathrooms for the school. If your child has special needs or circumstances, please consult with the Director in order to construct an individualized care plan. If the care your child needs warrants regular, one-on-one help from an adult, the parent will be asked to pay a fee to cover the cost of extra staff.

Confidentiality

All records provided regarding your child and family are confidential. We also ask that you respect this confidentiality by not asking staff to discuss your child or other children outside of the center. The staff at Wonderbloom understand the importance of this policy and feel uncomfortable when asked to discuss confidential issues concerning children in the program. We encourage you to bring up child and center issues with the Director. Exceptions to the confidentiality rule are emergency personnel or Utah Childcare Licensing.

Grievance and Dismissal

Wonderbloom administration and staff are committed to maintaining an open door, open-forum approach to problem solving and conflict resolution. If a family has a concern regarding the behavior of a teacher, the concern should be discussed with the director. If a family has a concern regarding the behavior of the director, they should speak directly to the director. If they feel their concerns still have not adequately been addressed, they should present their grievance in writing to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will respond in writing to the parents and schedule a meeting, if necessary. If there is a family or child that is a concern to the program, we will do our best to discuss and solve concerns with the family through phone calls, emails, or in-person meetings. If, at any time, in the opinion of the Director of Wonderbloom, continued enrollment of a child in the program is deemed detrimental to the child's health, progress, or to other children's health or progress, or for any other reason in the discretion of the director, he/she may be dismissed from the program, with a refund according to the refund policy.

What to Bring to School during Orientation:

Required - These will stay at school for the length of enrollment:

- Sunscreen



- Sun Hat (Such as [this](#).)
- Diapers & Wipes - if needed
- If Full Day and napping, sheet (crib size) and light blanket. Pillow and stuffy optional.
- Medications - if needed
- Extra change of clothes (shorts, shirt, underwear) in a gallon size ziploc bag, with another empty, labeled ziploc bag inside for sending soiled clothes home.
- **LABEL EVERYTHING WITH FIRST AND LAST NAME**

What to Bring to School Each Day:

- **Dressed for the weather.** *We recommend UV protective clothing such as a long [sleeve sun shirt](#) and [board shorts](#) as they help keep the child safe from the sun and they dry quicker than regular clothes when we play in the mud and water. Wear [shoes](#) that won't slip off and are waterproof. On a rainy day, Raincoat, [rainboots](#), waterproof [suit](#) or pants. We have a school store that sells gear for a discount.*
- **Plastic or metal water bottle** (that won't spill when tipped), already filled with water, labeled with child's first and last name.
- **Lunch, if Full Day.** *The lunchbox needs to be smaller than 9 x 6 x 3 in order to fit in the cubby. [Here](#) is a great option with a built in ice pack. Please only pack things that your child can open themselves. Better yet, open those and place them directly in the lunch box. Children have trouble with things like yogurt packs, chip bags, and candy wrappers.*
- **Transitional object, if needed.** *Must not be a choking hazard, so no smaller than a large marshmallow.*
- **No bags or backpacks - We have limited storage space in their cubbies and there is no room for a backpack.**