



Fledglings

Nature-Based Preschool

at *Prescott Farm*



2021-2022
PARENT HANDBOOK

Prescott Farm

Environmental Education Center

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Welcome to Fledglings!



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Fledglings, a nature-based preschool at Prescott Farm! We are excited to offer your 3-5 year-old a fully licensed educational program that promotes a developmentally appropriate foundation of skills while immersing them in the natural world and all it has to offer.

Fledglings is a program of Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center – a nonprofit organization that has been offering hands-on environmental education programs for the Lakes Region communities we serve since 1997. Located on 160 acres, our historic farm property is designated a New Hampshire Wildlife Viewing Area and offers more than three miles of woodland, pond, and field trails which comprise the “outdoor classroom” where our preschool students explore and learn each day. The grounds feature a wooded natural playscape which is a certified Nature Explore classroom; an old-fashioned maple sugaring operation; learning gardens where we grow vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs; a pollinator field that is a designated Monarch Butterfly Way Station; and so many woodland friends who cross our paths and capture our imaginations!

At Fledglings, your child will enjoy exploring the wonders that nature provides in the surrounding fields and forests. Our hope is for your child to become a life-long learner and make meaningful connections to nature as they continue to increase their understanding and appreciation of the world around them. Our preschool team is focused on children, education, promoting healthy active lifestyles, and building a sense of community – all through nature!

As we safely re-open Fledglings after a difficult year of social distancing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are looking forward to seeing old friends who have participated in Prescott Farm programs in the past and meeting new friends who will be joining us to explore, learn, and grow in nature!

Sincerely,

The Prescott Farm Staff



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Introduction

Vision Statement

At Fledglings, we embrace the natural curiosity of each child and offer meaningful child-led learning experiences that strengthen skill development and help to nurture a lasting connection with the natural world while fostering a love of learning.

Educational Philosophy

We believe young children will be better problem solvers, engineers, artists, and future inventors if they have the opportunity to use the great outdoors for their exploration and problem solving. Offering a developmentally appropriate nature-based curriculum where children are allowed to build dams and bridges in the streams; observe frogs, butterflies, and other animals in their natural habitats; make mud pies; and perhaps create a musical instrument from a found natural object, is not only a fun way to learn, but allows a child to make their own meaningful connections to the world around them and supports their natural sense of curiosity.



Children learn best through play and learn more when they are interested in the topics at hand. Everything is interesting when it's connected to places you have walked, sights you have seen and things you have smelled! Interacting with the natural environment stimulates the imagination and fosters a sense of belonging.

Learning how to respect nature and all that it has to offer helps to create caring, creative, empathetic, respectful, and responsible human beings.

Introduction, *continued*

What is a Nature-Based Preschool?

If you have attended any of our Polliwogs preschool programs, then you've had a "taste" of what a nature-based preschool is like! The natural world provides a natural classroom for learning. Nature is full of shapes, colors, habitats, insects, birds, and patterns...to name a few!

In a Nature-Based Preschool, children use outdoor experiences for:

- Exploring
- Counting
- Sorting
- Examining
- Problem solving
- Discovering

Outside exploration will allow children to:

- Experience the four seasons and how they impact daily activities first-hand
- Cooperate with others when building mud pies, snow forts, and stick houses for the woodland fairies they have read about
- Sequence events they witness in nature
- Create and re-tell stories about their experiences in a variety of natural habitats
- Enjoy dramatic play that focuses on the day's experience with topics like weather, hibernation, composting, and life cycles



Fledglings Preschool uses all of these wonderful natural experiences as a foundation for creating enthusiastic life long learners!

The Importance of a Nature-Based Curriculum

Exposure and access to “green spaces” has a wide range of social and health benefits. The more senses involved in a child’s experience, the deeper the learning process. Overcoming natural obstacles and observing forest life teaches children to trust their abilities.

Research* shows that being in nature creates opportunities for children to:

- Improve their focus
- Invent their own games
- Play and learn in a more cooperative manner
- Experience higher academic achievements and test scores
- Develop solutions to problems that build strength in problem-solving
- Develop trust, independence and respect for the world around them



Fledglings Preschool offers a curriculum that encourages healthy minds and bodies and the necessary academic skills children need as they prepare for kindergarten.

* Center for Research on Environment, Society, and Health

* Edutopia- Andrea Mills-Aug. 3, 2009- “Childhood Education Takes To The Outdoors” and Rebecca Alber- Feb. 28, 2014- “Teaching Students Not Standards”

Introduction, *continued*

Child-Centered Learning & “Ah-ha Moments”

With a child-centered learning approach, educators have the opportunity to follow the lead of the children based on each child’s interest and level of curiosity. This approach, in combination with brief structured lessons, allows children to make life-long connections to the natural world around them. These connections occur at a pace each child can manage. The value of that “Ah-ha Moment,” when a child first makes the connection on his/her own, is immeasurable! At Prescott Farm, children have many opportunities to discover, explore and express original ideas about their new experiences in many different ways. These wonderful shared experiences become a tool for strengthening friendship skills and learning the value of working together to solve a problem.

Child-Centered Learning & “Ah-ha Moments” promote:

- Cooperation and Collaboration
- Self-Expression and Creativity
- Respect and Appreciation
- Sensory Motor Opportunities



Curriculum & Activities

There are many subtle but important natural events that occur during each season of the year that many of us are not aware of. Our curriculum introduces children to those events and the role they play in creating a healthy environment for all living things. There are many opportunities for your child to make strong connections to nature and these connections will help to strengthen their social and emotional well-being as they explore, share, take turns, cooperate and collaborate with others through outdoor play, movement, gardening, and more! At Fledglings, learning always takes place looking through the “lens of nature.”

Our curriculum covers these valuable preschool requirements by offering developmentally appropriate activities through “instruction and exposure”:



Language

Reading, writing, singing, reciting, rhyming, letter recognition, letter sound activities, word and symbol recognition, sequencing of events, offering a print-rich classroom environment and positional word use during exploration like “over, under, through, above...”

Pre-Writing

Finger painting, sand drawings, letter formation, easel painting, drawing, and book making about experiences in the natural world.

Pre-Reading Skills

Left to right tracking with songs and poems, sequencing of events through pictures and storytelling, rhyming games, sight word exposure and experimenting with sounds.

Problem Solving

Sorting, graphing, nature exploration and discussion, cooperative play and teamwork, games, taking turns, number recognition, one to one correspondence, measuring, more or less activities, estimating, balancing, block building, dramatic play and simple science experiments.

Curriculum & Activities, *continued*

Science

Observation and prediction, evaporation, floating, sinking, shadows, bubbles, air, weather, plants, animals, water, seasons, life cycles, nature, and patterns.

Dramatic Play

Animal and nature imitation, character-role playing, storytelling, voice control, communication and puppetry activities to promote comprehension skills.

Visual Arts

Painting, gluing, folding, cutting, color identification, shapes, patterns, light, clay, gardening, symmetry and creative construction inside and outside.

Sensory & Motor Skills

Building, climbing, balancing, creating with clay & sticks, movement, games, music, dramatic play, five senses activities, pre-writing skills, running, skipping, hopping, and having fun!

Our Licensed and Approved Preschool Curriculum was influenced by:

- *N.H. Early Childhood Education Frameworks*
- *N.H. Early Learning Standards*
- *N.H. Child Development Bureau*
- *Division for Children, Youth, and Families*
- *N.H. Child Care Program Licensing Rules and Regulations*
- *Other Established and Successful Nature-Based Preschool Programs*

Facilities

Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center is situated on 160 bucolic acres and much of the learning that takes place year-round at Fledglings occurs in the fields, forests, and gardens we call our outdoor classroom.

We also offer our students a bright and open indoor classroom in the Samuel P. Pardoe Education Center which features passive solar and geothermal heat, as well as natural materials that lend comfort, light and warmth to the space.

While walks on our trails to learn about amphibians, squirrels, and trees are all part of the fun at Prescott Farm, we recognized the importance of child-led unstructured play as well. Our outdoor Natural Playscape is a certified Nature Explore classroom that offers unstructured imaginative play for Fledglings in a safe and contained setting.

New in 2022! We are planning to expand our facilities and upgrade our parking area to make traffic flow at Prescott Farm easier for families dropping-off and picking-up. We expect to expand our restroom facilities and the educational spaces near our historic 1883 barn to make exploration on our grounds easier and to involve Fledglings students and their families in crafting and cooking projects. More to come on this exciting expansion in the coming months!



Our program can accommodate a maximum of 18 students per day who are taught and supervised by our team of qualified teachers and assistant teachers. We maintain teacher to student ratios of at least 1:9 at all times as required by State of New Hampshire licensing standards both indoors and outside but we often exceed the minimum with ratios of 1: 6.

Preschool Staff

Our Nature-Based Preschool educators bring the following skills and experience to our program:

- Passion for and experience with teaching children in the natural world
- Knowledge of and respect for natural systems
- Years of teaching experience
- A passion for working with young children
- An understanding of the developmental needs of young children
- Have completed the necessary Early Childhood Education course requirements set by the NH State Licensing Board for Early Childhood Education/Childcare

Courtney Coppi, *Preschool Programs Director*



Courtney has been interested in educating children about nature since high school, when she completed an internship with the Director of Education at Massachusetts Audubon Society. She was subsequently hired as a teacher/naturalist, camp counselor, and Audubon Ark teacher where she traveled to area schools to teach students about imprinted wildlife. At Wheaton College, she earned her BA in English and Education. She has held various positions in the field of education, from teaching preschool, elementary school, and being an administrator and curriculum coordinator. Courtney raises goats, rabbits, and chickens and enjoys gardening, beekeeping, and spending time on the lake with her family.

Teachers:

Lathrop Kelly has over 10 years' experience working with children. She has taught preschool at a large child-care center, at a nature-based center, and was an Assistant Children's Librarian. Lathrop hold a BA in European Studies from BU, and is currently taking classes to obtain her Associates in Early Childhood Education. She has a passion for instilling a love and appreciation of the natural world in children.

Gladys Clausen knows Fledglings well because she is a former Fledglings parent. She is pursuing her teacher credentials as she has first hand experiences of the positive impact nature-based education has on children. She is an avid gardener, hiker and nature-enthusiast and enjoys sharing her passion for nature with children. Gladys is a long-time volunteer at the Gilford Public Schools and the Chair of the Volunteer Steering Committee. She is a native Spanish speaker and teaches flamenco dancing to children and adults through various local programming and online. (*See bottom of page 12 for additional information about Fledglings staffing*).

Schedule

We offer several schedule options for your child. You may choose from a 2-day Tuesday/Thursday, 3-day Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Full Week schedule. 3 year old children have the option of attending for the morning from 8-11:30, or full day from 8-3. *For information more on Tuition and Registration options, please see page 29.*

We want to encourage exploration, conversation, and a pace conducive to optimal learning. This means our days and weeks have flexibility and the days' schedule is determined by weather, interest, and whether or not more time is needed to complete a meaningful task. The sample schedule below is a "snapshot" and not a rigid routine.

Sample Morning 8:00-11:30

7:00-8:00	<i>Before Care</i>
8:00-9:00	Arrival, Sign-in & Greeting "Choice Time"/self-directed free play*
9:00-9:30	Morning Meeting, Greeting Activity
9:30-10:00	SNACK (brought from home)
10:00-11:30	OUTDOOR LEARNING and projects
11:30	Morning departure— (Goodbye to half day 3 year olds)

**Exploration, Choice Time, and Free Play promote independent learning and are always monitored by teachers.*

Sample Afternoon 11:30-3:00

11:45-12:15	LUNCH <i>brought from home</i>)
12:15-1:15	Story Time/Rest Time
1:15-1:30	Movement/Afternoon Meeting
1:30 –3:00	OUTDOOR LEARNING, Continuation of the Morning Theme, Free Play, and Exploration
3:00	Afternoon Departure
3:00-5:00	<i>After Care</i>

Other Educators: Substitutes: Occasionally, our staff has to be out due to personal reasons, for training, or to meet with parents. Our substitute teachers include parents with an education background or an interest in early childhood, experienced college students, and retired educators. All substitutes are fingerprinted and have the required criminal background check on file at Prescott Farm.

Volunteers & College Interns: Anyone who volunteers or interns in our nature-based preschool program is trained for that experience, working directly under the supervision of classroom teachers during daily instruction and activities. All volunteers and college interns are fingerprinted and have the required criminal background check on file at Prescott Farm. No child is ever left alone with a volunteer or college intern.

Schedule, *continued*

Arrival

Fledglings staff will be available to welcome students and families no earlier than 8:00am each day. Please do not arrive earlier than 8am unless you have pre-registered for our Before Care program, from 7-8am, as staff will be making last minute preparations for the days' lessons and activities at that time or could be in a meeting.

A cubby is available for each student to keep their own belongings. This helps children manage their own space and allows them to practice responsibility as they get used to daily routines.

Upon arrival parents/guardians will be required to sign-in their child and make sure their child has necessary attire/snack/lunch/permission slips, etc. for the day. Depending on the weather, children may be greeted outside or inside.

A smooth arrival usually means a happier, more productive day at preschool! When you drop off your child, make sure your goodbye discussions are about how excited you will be to hear about the special day they have had when you come back to pick them up!

Departure

Departure is at 11:30am for our half day 3-year-olds and 3:00 for full day children, unless you have pre-registered for our After Care program, available until 4:00pm or 5:00pm. Parents/guardians are asked to wait by the main entrance (inside if raining) until the Fledglings staff has released children from their activity. We are often out in the woods until 2:45pm. If you arrive to dismiss your child prior to 3pm, and we are not in the classroom, please check in with the office staff. They can radio us and relay to you where you can find us.

Parents/guardians will be required to sign their child out at pick up. Please check your child's belongings daily to see if spare clothing needs to be replaced for next time as outdoor excursions and art projects can often be wet and messy!

Please check the Fledglings Table in the coat area each day for important notices, which will also be posted on our private Fledglings Facebook page for your reference during the school year.

If your child will be leaving with someone other than who you originally authorized at the time

of registration, please fill out and sign a Pick-Up/Departure Form stating as such. To confirm identity and for your child's safety, we may ask for the individual's driver's license for verification. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

At the end of the school day, our staff turn their attention to cleaning up and planning and preparing for the next day. Therefore, children must be picked up within 15 minutes of class ending. \$1/minute will be charged for families arriving more than fifteen minutes late with a minimum charge of \$15.

Before & After Care

Before and After care is available for an additional fee, from 7:00am for 3-5-year-olds and until 5:00pm for 4-5-year-olds, but you must pre-register and pay in advance of attendance by going to the following link:

<https://prescottfarm.wufoo.com/forms/qkqh8zu19jwl9f/>

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is very important for your child to get the most from their preschool experience. If they are frequently late or absent, your child may feel disconnected once they return to school because their classmates are participating in fun activities that were introduced during your child's absence from class. This, in turn, can put added stress on classmate friendships and affect your child's self-esteem.

Please see page 25 for our policy on Sick Days and page 26 for our Inclement Weather Policy.

Please contact Prescott Farm's main office at (603) 366-5695 no later than 9:00am when your child will not be at school on any given day.

Refunds will NOT be made in the event of illness or other absences.

I See Carrots

I see carrots growing in the garden

I see carrots growing in a row.

First you grab the carrot top...

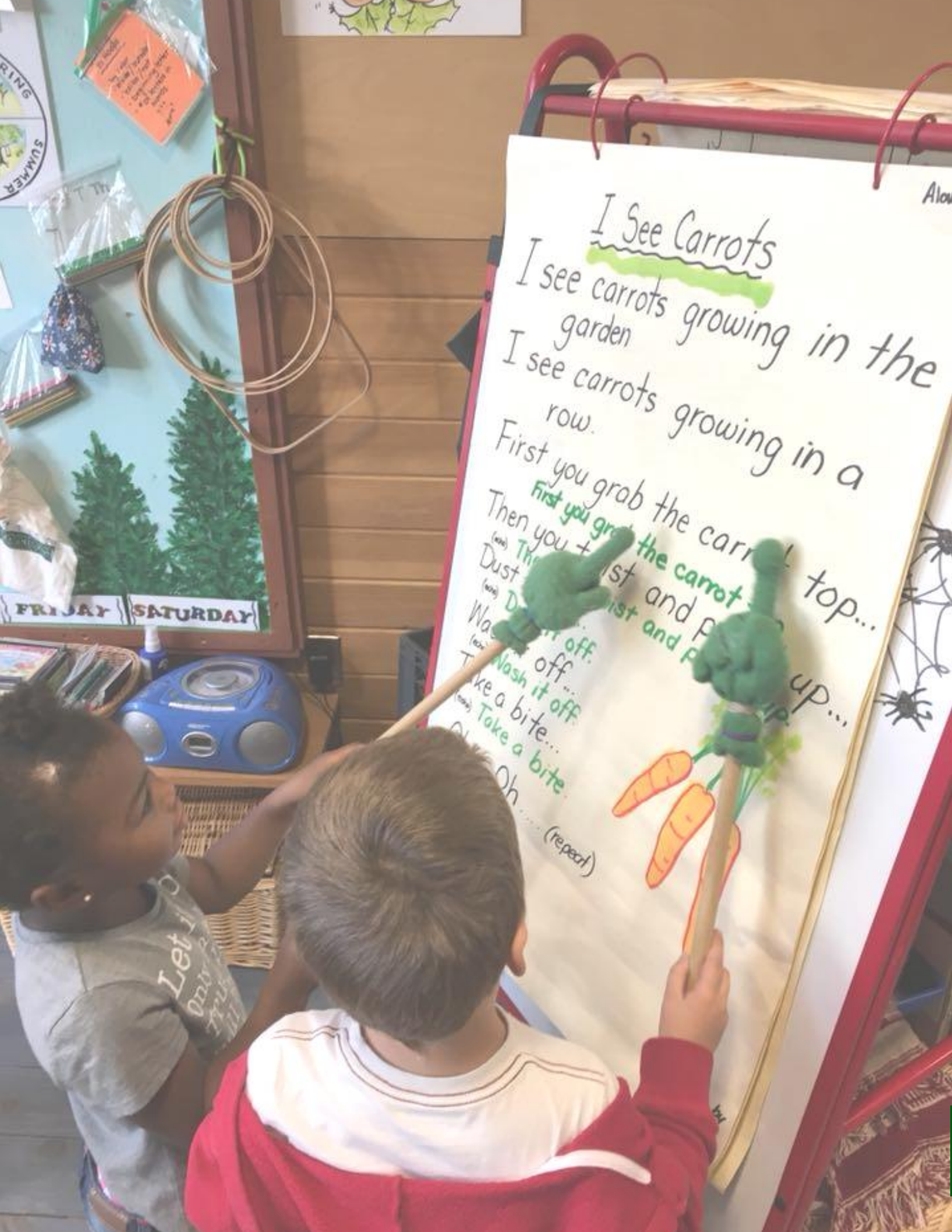
Then you grab the carrot top...

Dust it off. Dust it off.

Wash it off. Wash it off.

Take a bite... Take a bite...

Oh... (repeat)



2021-2022 School Year

September 6	LABOR DAY—NO SCHOOL
September 7	1st Day of Preschool (Tuesday/Thursday & Full Week)
September 8	1st Day of Preschool! (Monday/Wednesday/Friday)
October 8	Professional Development Day—NO SCHOOL
October 11	Columbus Day—NO SCHOOL
November 11	Veteran's Day Observed —NO SCHOOL
November 25-26	Thanksgiving Break
December 24-31	Winter Break
January 3	School Resumes
January 17	Civil Rights Day—NO SCHOOL
February 21	Presidents' Day—NO SCHOOL
February 28-March 4	Winter Break
March 21	Professional Development Day – NO SCHOOL
March 21	Open House
April 25 - April 29	Spring Break
May 2	Professional Development Day—NO SCHOOL
May 3	School Resumes
May 19 & 20	Progress Reports
May 26 & 27	Parent-Teacher Conferences
May 30	Memorial Day—NO SCHOOL
June 2 & 3	Last Days — Family Celebration of Learning!

In addition, there are many "happenings" at Prescott Farm for the general public and families – such as our Harvest Festival and WildQuest Camps. These events will be advertised and you will be notified in our Fledglings Newsletters as they draw near in case your family might enjoy participating!

Professional Development Days: Preschool Staff Workshop/In-Service Day

Progress Reports: A brief summary of your child's progress for reference.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Teachers will accommodate families on this day with options to schedule a meeting during the school day (with a substitute in classroom), or after school. Parents will be given their choice prior to these days.

A Note About Holidays

Fledglings is a nature-based preschool with a focus on the natural world. During holidays that focus on candy, gifts or specific decorations and song, we will remain focused more on our daily activities and keeping our routines in place. Some of our projects will touch upon the holiday that is circled on the calendar, but the projects we do surrounding that special day will be more oriented toward the natural side of the excitement.

Family Involvement

The Basics

Family involvement is extremely important to the development of young children and is an integral part of the preschool experience. We believe that parents are a child's first teacher and for this reason we feel strongly about encouraging parents to become active participants in their child's education. We consider parents a part of our educational team and will make every effort to include you in the learning process.

Below is a list of a few suggested ways parents/guardians/family members can support their child's educational experience here at Prescott Farm:

- Attend parent/family/school functions
- Attend parent/teacher conferences
- Make sure your child has a good night's sleep
- Provide an appropriate healthy snack and lunch
- Follow our private Fledglings Facebook Group to find out what your child is learning about at preschool
- Keep an open line of communication with your child's teacher(s)
- Assist with any family programs being offered
- Share your own interests or talents with your child's class on any given day: playing an instrument, teaching a dance, reading a favorite story, exposing students to yoga, helping with a favorite craft or project....
- Volunteer in the classroom *as a guest reader, classroom helper or extra pair of eyes on an outside adventure. (Please note: if you plan on volunteering with us on a regular basis for more than 15 hours a week, then you will need to be fingerprinted and have a "Volunteer Affidavit" on file with us.)*
- Volunteer at Prescott Farm—ask us for a list of the many opportunities to get involved
- Participate with your child in other Prescott Farm programs and events
- Participate in fundraising events for Prescott Farm

Family Involvement, *continued*

Younger Brothers, Sisters & Friends

During drop-off and pick-up, younger siblings or friends of Fledglings need to always be attended by a parent/guardian. We also ask that children/families not play in the classroom when teachers are not present. The classroom is for enrolled preschoolers only and each day it will be set up in preparation for the day's lessons. Not to worry however, we do welcome families to the classroom for fun-filled learning activities throughout the school year! We also offer a weekly Polliwogs program in which children ages 2 to 5 years-old and their favorite adult can explore and learn at Prescott Farm together!

Parent-Teacher Communication

We believe having good communication between families and teaching staff is important. We don't need to know all about your personal life, but please be aware that sometimes events at home which adults see as trivial can be very upsetting to young children. Once those children are in a school or social setting, those upsetting events often show up in a young child through tears, anger, or silence. Those who work with your child will usually see a change in behavior.

Sometimes the death of a pet, moving, or even sibling rivalry can affect your child's day. Please remember we are on the same team and let us know if something has happened in your child's life that might require us to give them a little more attention and support.

We offer several ways for you to communicate with us: Prescott Farm's email newsletters let you know what's happening at Prescott Farm on weekends, vacations, and evenings. Preschool teachers update the Fledglings Facebook page regularly, highlighting exciting things that took place in your child's day and reminding families of upcoming events. We offer Parent-Teacher Conferences in the spring (see page 19), but you can also request a meeting at any time with your child's teacher or the Early Childhood Program Director by emailing a request, sending in a hand written note with your child, or calling the main office.

Please make sure communication with your child's teacher is done at appropriate times and in a respectful way. Arrival and departure times can be very hectic. These are not times conducive to having a conversation with your child's teacher about a concern you may have. However, it might be enough time to let your child's teacher know that you would like to talk to them in the near future or would like a phone call from them to discuss your concern or situation.

Family Involvement, *continued*

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We will offer the opportunity for you to schedule a Parent-Teacher conference with your child's teacher on the days set aside on the School Calendar in May (see page 16). This conference opportunity will be an opportunity to review your child's growth and development throughout the preschool year. Conferences will be offered during school (with a substitute teacher in the classroom), or after school to give working parents an opportunity to attend without the need to find childcare for their child. You will be given the opportunity to choose a time that best fits your needs. Scheduling will take place on a first come-first serve basis. A conference sign-up sheet will be available at the sign-in podium offering you available days and times.

Progress Reports

Student Progress Reports go home near the end of the school year in May prior to Parent-Teacher Conferences and provide a brief synopsis of your child's social, emotional, and educational growth throughout the school year.



Discipline

Fledglings students learn the rules, responsibilities, boundaries, and expectations during the first several weeks of Preschool. Our goal is to create a safe and fun learning environment for all students who attend. With the on-going support and positive feedback from the preschool staff, your child should be able to function responsibly and respectfully each day as they become more and more comfortable with the routines and expectations.

We want the preschool experience to be a positive experience for all students. When faced with a behavior that needs modifying, we see an opportunity to teach children how to use appropriate social- emotional skills and help them better communicate their needs. This helps them manage and resolve conflict and develop pro-social behaviors.

The Prescott Farm staff strives to work closely with parents to make the preschool experience the best that it can be for each child and family. We will always have open communication with the parent/guardian of any child who is experiencing difficulty following the school rules in order to curb the behavior. However, in extreme situations where behavior is detrimental to the learning atmosphere on a continuing basis, a child may be asked to stay home for a day or two while the teachers work with the parents on a plan to help the child function more appropriately in the classroom. If the problem persists and attempts to change that negative behavior are unsuccessful, the child may be permanently dismissed from the preschool program. No refunds will be given in the case of dismissals due to misconduct.



Snacks & Lunch

A morning snack time is scheduled. On most days all preschool students come together for morning snack. Any child who does not finish a morning snack is given the opportunity to finish it later in the day if they are hungry. Any children registered to attend the After Care program from 3:00pm-4:00pm or 5:00pm need to pack an afternoon snack as well.

Snack and lunch items need to come from home and will not be provided by Prescott Farm. We strongly encourage a healthy snack of fruit or vegetables for your child and a non-sugared drink in a non-breakable container. Lunch should be a meal that is healthy and filling but not a 3-course dinner. Please choose foods carefully. Providing too many choices tends to be problematic for young children as they have difficulty making a decision as to what to eat. Often children are overwhelmed by their choices and fail to eat their snack or lunch altogether! ***Please do not send food that needs to be heated—unfortunately this is not a service we can offer.***

Labeling or physically separating your child's snack from their lunch items in their personal lunch box/bag will ensure that your child is eating as you planned for each of those times during our day. Since we are instilling a respect for the environment and its value to us, using minimal packaging and bringing a daily snack in a re-usable or recycled container is something that makes us smile! At Prescott Farm, we observe a "Carry-in/Carry-out" policy. Any trash that can't be composted will go home in your child's lunch box/bag each day. We encourage families to limit the amount of waste they produce by sending food in containers that can be washed and reused.

If your child has any dietary restrictions, or is allergic to particular foods, we need to be notified of this in person as well as having it documented on your child's initial health form at registration.

Due to the high numbers of children with allergies, we do not allow outside food to be brought into school and shared with classmates at any time, including birthday celebrations.

Dressing for Success

Outdoor exploration requires true hands-on learning. This means we use our eyes, ears, nose, hands, and feet! We are messy! Water, mud, grass stains, digging in the garden, sticky glue, and clay are all part of the learning fun! Because we believe this is the best way to learn, we urge you to support the learning experiences nature provides and dress your child to be an active participant.

As a nature-based preschool we spend several hours outside each day. This means students need to be prepared for all types of weather. “Extra” pieces of clothing (along with dressing your child in layers) are necessary for those special messy days ahead.

Outdoor play and learning is not much fun if you’re cold and wet and you can’t get up when you fall down! Clothing should allow freedom of movement, warmth, and be easy to put on and take off. Children need clothing that is easy for them to zip, button, or unsnap. This not only encourages independence and responsibility, but also helps for a smooth transition to and from the bathrooms. When we go on an outdoor adventure, we help any child who needs help dressing. Please make sure your child has appropriate, safe, outside footwear; soles should be good for gripping rocks and trees, climbing, and running. Sneakers, hiking boots, and insulated snow boots in the winter work just fine!

After returning from a fun, messy, outdoor adventure, your child will need a pair of shoes for indoors while their wet footwear is drying off. This “extra pair” can wait for your child’s return from the outdoors in their cubby. Indoor activities often involve gross motor movement which will require a good grip—so, if you bring in slippers, please make sure they have good traction.

Again, please expect your child to have a messy day. We want full participation in the lessons and worrying about ruining a favorite shirt or new dress can get in the way of that learning.

We will provide paint shirts for painting and art projects, but we cannot guarantee a spotless adventure; actually the opposite might be easier to promise!



Suggested Clothing List for all Seasons

FALL

Spare change of clothes

Rubber boots

Close-toed shoes

Light gloves

Rain jacket

Rain pants

Hat

WINTER

Spare change of clothes

Snow boots

Warm socks (wool!)

Snow jacket

Snow pants

2 pair of waterproof mittens

Second layer

Scarf

Hat/ear muffs

SPRING

2 Spare changes of clothes

Rubber boots

Close-toed shoes

Rain jacket

Rain pants

Hat

Brrrrr- It's Cold Outside!

We go outside every day! Weather can change as you know, so your child will need to be prepared with clothing for outdoor exploration for all weather conditions every day! (If the weather man says “sunny” and it starts raining when we are outside, we will need to be prepared for that!). We recognize that wind chills and temperatures below 10 degrees can be dangerous. Safety is our primary concern, so staff may use their discretion to limit outside time on extremely cold days.

All preschool staff members will remain with the students outside for instruction, supervision, and to comply with licensing laws. We cannot sacrifice a staff member to stay inside with a student who has not come prepared. We thank you in advance for making sure your child is ready to go!

Whose Hat is This?

Unless you have a set of twins, triplets, or stepchildren the same age at home, most likely all the coats and sweaters and shoes at your house are different sizes and are easy to match with their rightful owner. In a classroom setting where students are basically all the same age and size, there will be more than one hat that looks the same, several pairs of boots the same size, and mittens that have 6 or 8 matches!

We encourage you to involve your child by helping select the clothing they wear each day so they recognize it as their own. Part of teaching responsibility at this age is simply being aware of what belongs to you and keeping track of your own belongings. But as suggested above, once your child arrives at school and hangs up that awesome green jacket on a hook next to the other awesome green jackets beside it, that sense of belonging can be lost!

Please label everything that your child brings to school whether it is meant to remain in their cubby for future use or go home with them at the end of the day. This includes all articles of clothing, lunch box, snack containers, bug spray, sunscreen, etc.

Bug Spray & Sunscreen

Please apply any sunscreen or bug repellent on your child prior to arrival if necessary and leave a bottle of the same spray or lotion with your child's name on it for us to store in a safe place for later use. Staff will re-apply your child's specific lotion when necessary. ***We will not provide or share other children's sprays or lotions for outdoor protection.***



Health & Safety

The Basics

After your child's acceptance into the preschool, parents are required to complete the online "Participant Profile" section of the registration. This section lists all medical issues, immunizations, allergies, and medications. It is important that this section be completed fully and accurately and that you keep us updated on any changes to this information throughout the school year as it serves as an emergency reference for our staff should they need to contact you. We require this section be completed for every student before school starts. *(Although the information required is the same, the Fledglings registration process in Camp Doc is separate from the WildQuest Camp registration you may have completed.)*

Sick Days

There are times when your child should not attend school for health reasons. Please refer to the list below and if your child has one or more of the following symptoms, please do not send him/her to school:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- A low grade fever and acting ill
- An infectious disease
- Vomiting or upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Constant runny nose
- Coughing non-stop
- Pain

Please make sure your child is fever-free and has not vomited for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Covid Protocol: Please do not send your child to school if they have any new or unexplained symptom of Covid-19., including mild symptoms.; if they have shared a household with someone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 in the prior 14 days; or of they have traveled internationally or on a cruise ship in the last 10 days.

We will contact you if we feel your child has been inadvertently exposed to any contagious disease while at preschool. We request that you inform your child's teacher or contact the

Health & Safety, *continued*

main office if your child has been exposed to or contracts any communicable disease outside of the preschool environment so we can monitor others.

Please contact Prescott Farm's main office at (603) 366-5695 by 9am when your child will not be at school on any given day. **Refunds will not be made in the event of illness.**

Ticks, Bees & Poison Ivy

Stinging insects and plants are part of the natural world and they might be right where we're headed for exploration! Because of this we do "spot checks" for ticks before and after our outdoor activities and encourage you to do the same at home. Bees are important to the life cycles we will be learning about. We teach children to respect the bees and to leave them alone. If any student gets stung despite our best efforts to avoid the curious buzzing creatures, we will monitor that child and notify parents. The Prescott Farm staff identifies poison ivy and avoids any areas that have it. Please check with your child's physician if your child develops any rash you cannot identify.

Inclement Weather Policy

Prescott Farm follows the weather cancellations of Laconia School District. In the event of a delay for the school district, there will be no Before Care; 3-year-old Morning Fledglings will not attend; and 4- and 5-year-old Full Day Fledglings will arrive at 10:00am. We will also notify parents by posting to our Fledglings Facebook group page by 7:30am if school is delayed or cancelled that day. In the event that Laconia School District calls for an Early Release, Fledglings' half-day students will be picked up at the regular time of 11:30am, and all other students will need to be picked up by 1:00pm. There will be no After Care available in the case of an Early Release. **Cancelled school days due to weather will not be made up or refunded.**

Release of Children in Custody Situations

A child will be released only to those adults authorized by the parent/guardian listed in the "Participant Profile" section of the registration. This information must be updated with any changes throughout the school year. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than those adults listed in their registration, unless we have received prior approval from the child's parent/guardian. A change in the days' "authorized person" will require the person picking up a student to show a valid picture ID. If there is any question during departure, the parent/guardian will be contacted by phone to verify the authorized change.

Health & Safety, *continued*

In the event a non-custodial parent arrives to pick up a child, we must follow all legal guidelines for child custody situations. Unless a copy of a court order is on file which grants permission for the child to be released to their care, it is our policy to NOT release the child to the non-custodial parent. The custodial parent/guardian will be notified in such cases. We apologize in advance for any oversights, but it is our legal responsibility to comply with court orders and to make sure our students are in safe hands at all times while under our care.

Mandated Reporting

Prescott Farm is obligated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation to Child Protective Services and/or to the local law enforcement agency.

In Case of an Accident

Children are supervised at all times in their indoor and outdoor activities however, accidents may occur. In each case, parents are notified of any accident and the circumstances under which it occurred. If the accident is minor, the staff will handle it and either call to report the incident or report it when the child is picked up. Our first action will be to obtain the needed help and the second will be to notify the parent/guardian.

By law, we will document, maintain, and update, any health and accident reports along with

Safety During Covid-19

Prescott Farm is committed to keeping our community and our staff as safe as possible during the Covid-19 pandemic. As always, we are continuing with frequent hand-washing and cleaning of surfaces. In addition, we require documented temperature checks for each student at drop-off. In the event that the student or a member of his/her household has covid-19 or is experiencing covid-related symptoms, we will require documentation of a covid-negative test before the student is allowed to return to school.

Emergency Response

As required by law, Fledglings maintains an emergency response plan which includes response actions for natural, human-caused or technological incidents including but not limited to: evacuation, secure campus, drop and cover, lockdown, reverse evacuation and shelter-in-place. Fire drills are held every month. An emergency management binder is kept in a conspicuous place in the classroom detailing procedures should an emergency occur, and staff receive training on its use. Additionally, evacuation maps and emergency contact numbers are posted in every room.

A Final Note on Safety

Prescott Farm's Samuel P. Pardoe Building and grounds are open to the public. We take several measures to be sure that children are not in direct contact with members of the public: Children are never left unsupervised by members of the preschool staff, the door to the classroom is often kept closed to separate the classroom from the lobby area, and exterior doors off the classroom are kept locked during the day to prevent anyone from entering the room.



Tuition & Registration

Choose one:		Age Group	Time	Days	Tuition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Session A	3 year olds	8:00-11:30	Mon-Wed-Fri	\$3,575
<input type="checkbox"/>	Session B	3 year olds	8:00-11:30	Tues-Thurs	\$2,395
<input type="checkbox"/>	Session C	3-5 year olds	8:00-3:00	Mon-Wed-Fri	\$5,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Session D	3-5 year olds	8:00-3:00	Tues-Thurs	\$3,400
<input type="checkbox"/>	Session C & D	3-5 year olds	8:00-3:00	Full Week	\$8,400
<input type="checkbox"/>	Before Care	3-5 year olds	7:00-8:00am	Per Day	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	After Care	3-5 year olds	3:00-4:00pm	Per Day	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	After Care	3-5 year olds	3:00-5:00pm	Per Day	\$20.00

Tuition is based on the number of school days in each session per school year. “No school days” (teacher professional development days and holidays) are already accounted for in the prices. No refunds will be given for inclement weather closings or days your child misses school. We do not offer a discount on preschool tuition to Prescott Farm Members.

Registration

Our enrollment timeline is three-tiered. Enrollment begins for existing students and siblings on April 1st at 9:00am. Enrollment begins for those currently on our “wait list” on April 15th at 9:00am. Finally, open enrollment for the general public April 29th at 9:00am.

All Registrations are completed online. Current Fledglings and families on our wait list will be contacted with the registration link.

If you should have any questions regarding the registration process, please call our office at (603) 366-5695 or e-mail info@prescottfarm.org. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis within each registration tier. If there are more registrations than spaces available, you will have the option to be added to the waitlist.

There is a \$100 non-refundable Registration Fee (\$25 for scholarship applicants) which must accompany each child’s registration application. The Registration Fee holds your child’s place

Tuition & Registration, *continued*

until the first month's tuition is due on June 25, 2021. If the first tuition payment is not received by the deadline, your child's space may be lost.

Please Note: Once your registration has been confirmed, you must then complete the "Participant Profile" section of the registration by August 20th.

Children must be no younger than 2 years & 9 months when entering the program in the Fall (3 years by December 31) and (4 or 5 years by December 31). NO EXCEPTIONS. Your child must be toilet trained and wearing underpants (not pull-ups) to attend. If on August 27, 2021, your child is not toilet trained, you may either: a) pay the tuition and have the preschool hold the space until your child is ready to start school, b) put your child on a wait list in the hopes that a spot will open after he/she is toilet trained OR c) decide to hold off and wait until the next school year. In all three cases, your child's registration fee will be held until they are ready to enroll. We understand that accidents happen, but we are not set up to change diapers.

If your child has been registered, but he or she does not appear for classes, without notice or other arrangements, by September 30, 2021, you will be obligated to continue with future tuition payments until you notify us of your enrollment situation. If arrangements have not been made by September 30, 2021, the deposit and payments made will be forfeited and your child's spot will be made available to other waitlisted families. If you have prepaid for the entire 2021-2022 school year, as soon as your child's spot has been filled, you will be reimbursed for the remaining months of that prepaid amount.

Payment Plans

You have the option to pay your child's tuition in full for the school year or monthly. In all cases, the first month's (September's) tuition is due by June 25, 2021 and the second month's (October's) tuition is due by August 27, 2021.

Full Payment: Full payment is due by June 25, 2021 and will receive a 2% discount.

Monthly Payment Plan: After the first and second months' tuition payments are made on the dates specified above, the remaining tuition will be divided into seven equal payments to be made on the first Monday of each month from October-April.

Continued on next page...

Tuition & Registration, *continued*

You may choose to make payments by cash, check or credit card online (we prefer cash or check). A \$35.00 charge will be assessed for each Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) check received. Even if you plan to make your payments by cash or check, you must put a valid credit card on file with our office. If you have not made your payments by cash or check on time, they will be charged to your credit card. **If for whatever reason you choose to withdraw your child from the program before the end of the school year, the balance of payments due for the school year will be charged to your credit card unless we can fill your spot from our waiting list.**

Tuition Assistance

At Prescott Farm, we believe all children should have access to quality preschool education. Many generous community members and organizations donate funds to provide tuition assistance for families who would not otherwise be able to attend Fledglings. In order to be considered for the 2021-2022 school year, **all tuition assistance applications must be completed online no later than May 28, 2021.** Funds are very limited and will first be awarded to children already enrolled at Fledglings during the prior year who require financial assistance to continue in our program. Any remaining funds will be made available for new Fledglings students on a first come, first served basis. We do expect that families will contribute financially as much as possible to their child's preschool education.

Verification of income eligibility will occur through our partnership with the Family Resource Center of Lakes Region Community Services (LRCS) or by evidence of enrollment in the children's Medicaid program. All tuition assistance applicants must complete the "Scholarship Application" (in the "Participant Profile" section of the online registration), which will enable us to verify eligibility.

Families applying for tuition assistance will be charged a reduced Registration Fee of \$25 at the time of registration. This fee may be refunded if sufficient tuition assistance is not available. Notification of awards will be made via email by June 18, 2021. If you choose to accept the tuition assistance offered, the remainder of the first month's tuition will be due by July 16, 2021 and your second payment will be due on August 27, 2021. The remaining tuition will be divided into seven equal payments to be made on the first Monday of each month from October-April.

New for 2021– Fledglings is now part of the State of NH Childcare Scholarship Program and accepts the State of NH Childcare Scholarship for eligible families!

Toys from Home



We understand that sometimes little ones need a comfort item from home to help with new situations. Comfort items can be in the shape of a stuffed animal, a fuzzy blanket piece, or a favorite toy. We prefer that these special items stay home but understand that they might be needed initially to ease your child into their new preschool environment and routine-especially for those 4 and 5 year olds who might like one during their scheduled rest time in the afternoon. We welcome that initial need. After the initial adjustment period, we will encourage keeping any special item from home in your child's bag or cubby and only using it in times of need.

Accidental loss or damage of a special item from home would be a sad event for your child and would disrupt their fun day of learning at school and possibly ruin a good night's sleep at home! Please discourage your child from bringing valuable or small items that could easily be misplaced or lost and reinforce the importance of keeping it safely waiting at home until their return.

Birthdays & Special Occasions

We are more than happy to celebrate your child's special day! Since we are nature-based and are trying to educate children about the important role of nature in their lives, some of the celebration for your child's special day will be connecting them and others to what is happening in the environment at the time of year/season in which they were born (rather than on materialistic/commercialized celebrations that are common to most).

Though there won't be cupcakes and candles and a "traditional birthday bash," your child will be the leader of our activities for the day, they will have some selective privileges for the day as the "teacher's helper," they will celebrate with their friends through song and cooperative activities, and feel extra important and special on their day as they turn another year older! If you are planning any type of celebration outside of school for your child and expect to invite all of their classmates, you can bring the invitations to school. If you are not inviting every

Continued on next page...

Miscellaneous, *continued*

child in the class we request that you do so privately and outside of preschool hours of operation. Please do not hand out invitations or gifts unless they are for everybody. Please do not hand out other non-preschool communication like flyers and pamphlets. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please check with the Director.

Again, due to the high numbers of children with allergies, we do not allow outside food to be brought into school and shared with classmates at any time, including birthday celebrations.

Photo Policy

It is our responsibility to protect the welfare of Fledglings students while at the same time balancing the need for public relations and promoting the efforts of Prescott Farm and our nature-based preschool.



Pictures are taken on a daily basis to record progress and document our awesome activities. Some of these pictures will be posted and used in our preschool classroom or on our closed Facebook page and some might be great candidates for a newspaper story. Photographs of our students engaging in nature-based activities will also be used as illustrations in the books we will be creating about our exciting adventures. We ask your permission to use photos of your child engaged in an activity by offering you a release form to electronically sign

at the time of registration. At that time, you will have the option to approve or disapprove the use of your child's photo to document our activities and we will respect your wishes. Once enrolled, you will be invited to join our Preschool Facebook group page, so that you can see a photo documentation of our days. These photos are NOT available to the general public for viewing.

We also ask parents who may have taken photos of their child playing/working with other classmates during any activity to be respectful of those other classmates/families and not post the child's name if sharing any of those photographs online.

A Final Word...

Preschool is often the first time children leave family to be with others their own age. It is often the first time they share with someone, other than their sister or brother, and listen to someone other than their mother or father. Children are usually excited to participate in this new experience, but hesitant to say “goodbye” to the comforts of home. We totally understand this. Everyone will adjust to change at their own rate when they are ready and we are here to guide that adjustment period in a positive, nurturing way.

Be prepared for your Preschooler to have their ups and downs the first few days and weeks as they figure out their new environment and find their own “comfortable place” away from home. What parents/ guardians can do to help prepare their child for Preschool is to talk about it from time to time the week before preschool begins. Answer your child’s questions with honest answers:

“You’ll make new friends and be able to play with them every time you go.”

“You’ll be playing games and exploring outside.”

“There will be fun activities that are messy, and painting, and puppets....”

“You can build things with your new friends.”

“You will learn about animals and trees and sing songs and hear silly stories...”

“It will be a fun place to be!”

“Gee, I don’t know.... we’ll have to ask them about that.”

Maybe if you haven’t already, you can come with your preschooler to Prescott Farm to walk on the trails and visit. Perhaps your child will enjoy participating in one of the preschool Polliwog classes we offer! This would be a great way to introduce them to the learning environment at Prescott Farm with you by their side! It may sound silly, but on a visit with your child, it’s important to have them see where the bathrooms are, so they will also be comfortable using them once they have enrolled in preschool. Anything that ties to Prescott Farm will be an opportunity to better prepare your child for coming as a student in the fall!

...And last but not least, please be sure to communicate with your child’s teacher(s) if your child exhibits some anxiety or fear about coming so an enjoyable, smooth transition from home to school can happen. We are all on the same team and we want this to be an awesome experience for everyone!

Acknowledgement

The **Fledglings Preschool Parent Handbook** describes important information about Fledglings Nature-Based Preschool at Prescott Farm. I understand that I should consult the Early Childhood Programs Director or the Executive Director regarding any questions not answered in the Handbook.

Since the information and policies described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the Handbook may occur. While all such changes may be communicated through official notices, I understand that revised information may supersede, modify or eliminate existing policies with or without prior notice. I understand that this Handbook supersedes any prior handbook.

You will be required to acknowledge receiving and reading the 2021-2022 Parent Handbook with an electronic signature at the time of registration.