

Kid's Country Barn Handbook

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Contact Information

Address:

Kid's Country Barn
8903 NE Koura Road
Bainbridge Island WA 9810

Email:

kidscountrybarn@gmail.com

Phone Numbers:

Office: 206-317-6504

Emergency Cell (Janice): 206-265-1598

Emergency Cell (Ollie): 206-669-7296

Kid's Country Barn Preschool

First built in 1990 by Ollie and Janice Pedersen, Kids Country Barn has been carefully developed into one of the most beautiful preschool settings in the Pacific Northwest. A meandering stream filled with wildlife divides the property. Rolling green hills lead to trails bordering the "Grand Forest" and "Meigs Wetlands" of Bainbridge Island.

Program facilities include a large barn, covered sports arena, indoor heated swimming pool, playing fields, forested trails and campgrounds, a covered sport court, playground structures, a terraced children's vegetable garden, extensive manicured lawns, rolling pastures, a serene Japanese touring garden, orchards, all combined together to create a beautiful country landscape for children to explore. Our goal is to create future stewards of the environment and empathetic community members by providing meaningful contact with the natural world. The integration of our outdoor spaces into the total atmosphere of Kid's Country Barn is what sets it apart from any other facility.

We conduct all facets of our business in accordance with DCYF non-discrimination policies. Kid's Country Barn maintains certified Montessori teachers and Early Childhood Educators. Our staff also includes math specialists and certified Red Cross Lifeguards along with specialists for reading and the Arts. The Montessori education at Kid's Country Barn links the academic studies with direct outdoor experiences in nature. Since inception, the children have participated in daily activities such as hiking, outdoor dining and picnics, gardening, harvesting, cooking, biking, waterplay and exploring the natural world in their own "back yard."

Nature helps to develop a child's senses, stimulate their imagination and teaches them to take risks and respect the earth. Our method of combining outdoor education along with the indoor academic studies has time and again proven to be a powerful antidote to the many obstacles that children face today. By creating this beautiful childhood preserve on Bainbridge Island, we remain committed to the natural, social, and political history of our area and continue to be at the forefront of a new kind of school reform.

Objective

Kid's Country Barn's objective is to develop the whole child through a culturally responsive learning environment. The program offers a variety of daily activities to promote growth in the areas of academic, physical, social and emotional development. Maria Montessori discovered that children have critical learning periods (sensitive periods) for each new level of learning. During these sensitive periods, children absorb the lessons easier and faster than they ever will again. It is imperative that the child not be discouraged during one of these periods. The materials; both traditional, the extensions and contemporary; and the environment in the Montessori classrooms, are designed to promote and nourish the sensitive periods. These periods are what create, in the child, a love of learning, self-confidence, and an awareness of how their actions affect others, that is so essential to a healthy development.

To ensure that these objectives are met, continual observation and screening of each child's development is an on-going process at our school. We conduct parent-teacher conferences every year to assess each child's development. Kid's Country Barn's goal is for each child's need to be met. We, as Montessori teachers, meet the child where they are, socially, emotionally and academically.

What is Montessori?

The Montessori philosophy and method of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. She believed that children learn by actively manipulating interrelated materials and through repetition of movement. The incorporation of the hand and the brain is automatic. She believed that the inherent lesson within the materials becomes a part of the mind. Therefore, the intricate process of the Montessori classroom is successful because of the skillfully developed activities and materials, and a meticulous method of administering them. The foundation of Montessori learning is the practical life section of the classroom. This section is based on everyday activities that help the child develop their small muscle and hand-eye coordination. The activities develop the base for upper level of learning. The other areas of the Montessori classroom are sensorial, language, math, geography and botany. The incorporation of Mindfulness and Yoga in our program, help to integrate the body and mind for all levels of Montessori.

How does Montessori differ from the standard classroom?

The Montessori system differs in order of sequence. The Montessori classroom is set up so the environment and work are what control the child's activity. The child and their interests are the next order of priority. The teacher is the facilitator of the environment. After the teacher has established the scope of readiness for each child, individual lessons will be presented. In this way, every child is meeting their own separate potential.

What is an Anti-Racist Curriculum?

Anti-racist curriculums aim to create an inclusive learning environment for all students by acknowledging and empowering diverse perspectives in developmentally appropriate ways in daily lessons. This culturally responsive curriculum draws from students' everyday realities to create global connections, instill a sense of classroom community, and establish a learning environment in which all children feel safe, loved, and confident to be themselves. The curriculum begins with the language, tone and daily culture of our programming. Therefore, our Anti-Racist curriculum starts with the instructional principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL gives all students an equal opportunity to succeed because the goal of UDL is to use a variety of teaching methods to remove any barriers to learning. UDL builds in flexibility that can be adjusted for each child's strengths, passions, and needs, which scaffolds the Montessori classroom. UDL offers curricular flexibility to create culturally responsive, student-centered lessons.

Why an Anti-Racist Curriculum?

Research shows that teachers do not have as high expectations of students of color, those who are neurodiverse, who come from low-income backgrounds, or those who are emergent multilingual learners. Educational biases cause less rigorous and engaging instruction and harmful inconsistencies in children's experiences of grade-level content. We continuously examine ourselves as educators and adjust our teaching and materials to ensure they are free of bias, oppression, racism, and underrepresentation. Our anti-racist curriculum requires teachers to continually examine themselves and their pedagogies so that we are robustly serving all of our students in ways that are relevant to them and that acknowledge diverse perspectives.

Kid's Country Barn Activities

- Circle Time
- Montessori Lessons
 - Practical Life
 - Sensorial
 - Math
 - Language
 - Geography
 - Botany
- Independent Montessori Work Time
- Culturally Relevant and Responsive Anti-Racist Lessons
- Art
- STEM
- Music & Dance
- Environmental Science
- Hiking
- Forest Free Play
- Gardening
- Farm Animal Care (Goats, rabbits, and horses)
- Yoga & Mindfulness
- Sports & Games
- Biking
- Recess
- Snacks

Sign-in and Sign-out Procedure

Every parent, caregiver, or guardian is required by state law to sign their child in and out every day on the sign-in and sign-out sheet located outside of your child's classroom.

Pick-up and Drop-off

Kid's Country Barn will not release a child at our school, to anyone who does not have written permission and is not written down on your child's emergency form. You may call or write into the office if you need to have someone pick-up your child that is not on the list you have provided to us.

Please have an emergency back-up to have someone able to pick-up your child from school if there is an emergency. If there is a power outage or if there is an emergency at the school, we require that your child is **picked up within a half hour time period.**

Enrollment and Tuition

To register your child for enrollment **or to be placed on our waiting list**, a \$175 registration fee is due along with the Admissions Package filled out in **COMPLETION**.

Admission forms need to be returned to the office via email (kidscountrybarnoffice@gmail.com) If we are able to enroll your child at the time of registration, a one month deposit is also due at that time. Payment is made using your ACH information, giving us authorization for direct deposit. Your deposit is non-refundable and will be used for the last 30 days your child is in attendance.

You are responsible for a 10 month contract. If Kid's Country Barn remains open and you decide to withdraw your child for any reason, you will remain responsible for the remaining payments due for your 10 month contract. Our 10 month program is for the months of September through June. There is an annual supplies fee that is due March 1st, for the following school year that starts the following September.

The supplies fee guarantees your child's placement for the following year and is non-refundable. (The supplies fee will be prorated for a mid year enrollment.)

Kids Country Barn does not discount or make up for missed days due to vacation, weather, pandemics or sickness. Tuition will remain the same regardless of how many days your child has missed. Tuition will increase every year due to the cost of living expense.

Withdrawal

If a concern develops, you will refer to our Parent Manual and follow the steps outlined for a successful resolution. If we find a resolution is not possible, after allowing a 30 day trial period, from the time you voiced your concern and decide to withdraw your child, then you forfeit your deposit and registration and supplies fee. If after just having just paid and you choose not to follow the steps provided, you will forfeit that month's tuition along with your deposit, registration fee and supplies fee.

Emergency Information

Please keep all of your emergency information **up-to-date at all times**. Even if your information is temporary, it should be given to the office as soon as your information changes.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Licensed childcare providers and their staff are required by Washington State law to report suspected incidents of abuse and neglect (RCW 26.44.030(1)). In doing so, they will have civil immunity under the law for good faith reporting. Failure to report can result in a gross misdemeanor charge.

Communication

Please read the daily boards that are posted outside every classroom. Teachers will send out news bulletins to their classes and the office will send out weekly and monthly announcements as needed. Every parent needs to contact their child's teacher directly if the child will be absent or late. We require that parents contact their child's teacher to communicate any concerns or questions. All concerns should be addressed within 24 hours of the event leading to a concern and done directly with the staff person that was present. All matters regarding tuition, policies and scheduling should be done directly with the office.

Holidays and Closures

Kid's Country Barn celebrates all religious holidays that may pertain to our student population and the cultures around the world. Kid's Country Barn is closed for all Federal Holidays including but not limited to, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after. Please refer to our annual calendar for closure dates.

Kid's Country Barn does not make up days due to weather. Should the public schools close due to snow and ice, Kid's Country Barn will also close and follow their protocol. If Kid's Country Barn remains open during a pandemic, we will continue to charge the monthly tuition to any family that may wish to withdraw their child for a short or undetermined amount of time. We do not make up days due to holidays, vacations or absence during the summer months.

Lunches and Snacks

We are 100% nut free facility. You may send “sun butter” sandwiches but ***ALL OTHER NUT BUTTERS are not allowed.*** Children need to bring a healthy, well-balanced lunch.. The lunch box needs to be a solid lunch box. No paper bags please! Please pack their lunch in containers that will keep their food warm, if need be. We will not be heating up lunches in the microwave. Please include ALL UTENSILS in their lunch box so that we do not have to provide them at lunch time. The lunch box needs to have their first and last name written on the outside of their lunch box in clear letters. All of the containers and utensils also need to have their name written on them. Mark all containers and utensils and make sure they are easily opened by your child. Please provide a full water bottle for your child’s daily use and mark the bottle with your child’s first and last name.

Clothing

Every child is required to bring a backpack, marked on the outside with first and last name, with two COMPLETE changes of clothes. Parents need to check the backpack every night to replace clothes that were possibly used. Parents are required to label coats, hats, mittens, etc.

Please dress your child for going outside EVERY day regardless of the weather. There is no bad weather, just bad clothes. Please do not let your child choose their clothes if they are not appropriate. For each season, provide the proper layers: ***waterproof boots and rain jackets with HOODS are required, and no tie shoes, flip flops, fancy or open toed shoes for any season.***

Our school is situated in the country so please expect to pick-up your child with dirty or wet clothes on occasion. We encourage them to enjoy the elements without concern about getting dirty. Please do not ask your child to “stay clean” or send them in new shoes and ask them to not get them dirty. By doing so, it restricts your child’s ability to explore.

Hygiene and Hand Washing Policies

Upon arrival at school, children are required to wash their hands. Staff and children will wash their hands in every situation that the state law requires for health and sanitation. We follow the DCYF guidelines for both hand washing and cleaning. Kid's Country Barn uses Seventh Generation products for disinfecting our school. We limit the amounts of chlorine solution that is used in our facility.

Toys from Home

No outside toys from home may be brought to school. Appropriate books from home are welcome. Depending on our curriculum, we may have students bring in one sharing item for a special day.

Hikes and Field Trips: (both onsite and off property)

Kid's Country Barn teachers go on spontaneous hikes with the children, both on the property and on nearby designated trails off the property. The hikes will traverse our school and private property leading to public and private trails. The children are welcome to explore the 10 acre property for supervised outings. The children have supervised access to the outbuildings on the Pedersen Farm for theatre, yoga, sports, swimming and cooking field trips.

Discipline Policy

We are concerned about the safety and appropriate behavior of the students who attend Kid's Country Barn. We have established clear rules that encourage a positive, peaceful environment for everyone. The rules that have been established for the students attending our school will not inhibit their natural creativity and social growth.

Dismissal Policy & Zero Tolerance Zone for Hatred and Anger

We encourage all behavior to be positively directed for every child. We rely on authoritatively redirecting children, modeling expected behaviors, and learning from natural consequences to help children self-regulate and develop self-discipline. We avoid ineffective punishments, time outs, shaming, or controlling measures.

If any child at Hazel Creek habitually displays behaviors such as defying, fighting, hitting, biting, running away, or inciting hatred, and a collaborative resolution cannot be reached, they will be asked to leave for the benefit of our school community.

We have a **ZERO** tolerance policy for bullying, threatening behavior or inciting hatred. Any indication that your child is repeating false information, racial or religious bias or promoting social injustice by repeating what they have heard or been told to believe at home, which encourages their acquired bias, we will ask for immediate removal from our school.

We will not tolerate the perpetuation of ANY conspiracy theories or intolerance of cultural and racial differences from any member of our families. We will not tolerate the display of hatred expressed through articles of clothing, stickers on cars or a public displays of intolerance by any family member that has enrolled their children at our school. If we hear your child repeating any falsehoods, we accept that we are not

going to change their home environment, but we will be proactive and do everything possible to keep the environment at our school, one of inclusion, love and empathy for all members of our society. If your philosophy does not align with this policy, you need to withdraw your child from our school immediately.

If a child's behavior becomes a problem in school, we will take the following steps:

1. Document the child's behavior
2. Notify the parents immediately
3. Have a collaborative meeting with both the teacher and a witness or call for immediate removal
4. Request swift intervention with professional counselors if it is mutually agreed upon that the circumstance can allow for time to improve the child's behavior.
5. If Kid's Country Barn decides to continue having the child attend, there will be a re-evaluation at the end of a 2 week period to determine if there has been a significant effort and improvement on the part of the family and child to remedy the situation.

