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Welcome Little Feet Families!

Thank you for your interest in our nature-based preschool program. Please read the following letter to familiarize yourself with some of the logistics of forest school and see if it will be a right fit for your child and family. If questions or comments arise, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Little Feet staff. We are here to support you and your child on their development journey.

#### **A. What is Forest School?**

Forest school is where children go outside to learn. Nature provides the classroom, materials, and the subject matter. Forest school consists of the following key elements, although additional content/activities may be added based on child interest.

1. Inquiry-based learning
2. Emergent curriculum
3. Observation
4. Risk
5. Time outside in all weather/seasons
6. Use of senses
7. Mindfulness and reflection

#### **B. Location**

Little Feet Forest School base camp is located on an acre of private property in Evergreen (up Brook Forest Road). The land includes various local plants and animals, including Aspen and Ponderosa Pine trees, foxes, deer, elk, and pet rabbits and chickens. The space is fitted with a large tipi that will be used as our outdoor classroom, especially in cold weather. Nap and lunch time will be conducted in the house on the property; children can also access restrooms in the house as well.

At least once per week (weather permitting), the school will travel to Lower Maxwell Falls trail head (roughly .5 mile walk from basecamp), so students can explore more of their local environment and watershed systems.

#### **C. Forest School Gear**

Students will be outside everyday, rain or shine. Proper gear will ensure their safety as they learn. High quality gear will sustain rough play for longer, for brand, company, and used-gear recommendations please contact our office.

What to bring:

- Full change of clothes (these can be stored at school in case)
- Water bottle
- Lunch (for full-time students)
  - Snacks will be provided in both the AM/PM sessions everyday
- Bug repellent
- Sunscreen
- Mask (optional)
- Weather specific clothing- (ex: raincoat, boots, gloves, hat)-CHECK WEATHER FORECAST
- Waterproof boots (no sandals!)

#### D. Forest School Rules

As a group we operate by the three golden rules:

1. Be kind to others
2. Be kind to nature
3. Be kind to yourself

Little Feet instructors enforce rules and expectations using the principles of *Love & Logic* by Jim and Charles Fay. We work to support children in body, social, and emotional awareness through strategic language, in ways that promote positive behaviors (versus focusing on negative behaviors).

#### Additional Safety Rules:

1. Only climb twice your height
2. Sticks can be used for building, tools, pretend play, and games. They are not for hitting others.
3. Rocks can be used for building, tools, pretend play, or collecting. They are not for throwing at others.
4. If you see a live animal, do not pick it up, especially a snake. Find an adult to show it to.
5. Stay in the boundaries (boundaries will be established in our first class).
6. If you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, feel sick or have been in direct contact with someone who is sick, PLEASE STAY HOME.
7. Nature belongs in nature- rocks and leaves may go home, but all other natural resources need to stay in nature.

#### COVID Considerations

Little Feet Forest School follows all CDC recommendations as it relates to COVID regulations. Please see the [CDC website](#) for more information.

## **E. Role of the Teacher**

The role of the teacher in forest school is to provide a safe environment for children to take risks and learn new knowledge/skills. Forest school instructors are expert observers.

### How teachers use observation:

- 1) Emergent Curriculum- Forest school curriculum is student-led. Instructors make careful observations during free play about interests and themes the children are attracted to. They then use the student inquiries to form future lessons and learning.
- 2) Child Development- Instructors will make careful observation notes (both written and photographed) about each child's individual progress and strengths. Areas of observation include: physical, cognitive, and social abilities and development. Each season families and learners will have a "strength conference" with an instructor to discuss how their student is growing.

We hope after reading through this letter, you and your child feel that Little Feet Forest School is the perfect place for them to put on their explorer hats, get dirty, and have fun learning. For further questions, comments, and inquiries please contact the Little Feet Forest School.

Sincerely,

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