



Mountain Oak School

Sunflower Kindergarten 2014-2015

Welcome Sunflower Kindergarten Families!

I am thrilled to be returning to Mountain Oak School as the new kindergarten teacher! I have taught 1st-5th grade at private and charter Waldorf schools, and developed successful Waldorf enrichment programs for home-schooling students from ages 5-11. I am extremely excited to begin our year together- it will be filled with new and enriching experiences for all of us.

The Waldorf Kindergarten approach works with the daily, weekly, and seasonal rhythms throughout the year. Our work together will include watercolor painting, developmental movement (working on large and fine motor skills and developing a healthy sensory-motor system-essential for learning), baking, storytelling, puppetry, singing, gardening, beeswax modeling, drawing, and nature studies. We will build a rich foundation for literacy, mathematics, and science in a nurturing, multi-sensory environment. There are many wonderful festivals that we celebrate throughout the year. Please let us know if there are any special festivals that your family would like to share with the class!

In the classroom the teacher engages in activities that the children can easily imitate (for example, baking, painting, gardening, woodworking, and handicrafts), adjusting the work to the changing seasons and festivals of the year-there is a daily, weekly, and yearly rhythm.

Imagination is nurtured through carefully selected stories, puppetry, and by encouraging free play. During this free or fantasy play children act out scenarios of their own creation, which helps them to experience many aspects of life more deeply. Toys are made of natural materials. Pine cones, wood, cotton, silk, shells, stones and other objects from nature that the children themselves have collected are used in play and to beautify the room.

The school day is arranged to create a balance between creative play, in which children use their own initiative, and structured activities, in which the whole group participates. Singing leads the children through every transition. Every day has its own special activity:

Daily Rhythm

Arrival

Good Morning Circle/Morning Verse

Artistic Activity and Purposeful Work/Play/Small Group Skills

Tidy and Snack Set Up

Circle (developmental movement with academic integration....SO IMPORTANT!!)

Morning Snack

Quiet Time

Outdoor Play (Gardening and Woodworking will often be offered during this time)

Story

Goodbye Song/Closing Verse

Our first day of school is Tuesday, August 12th. Please refer to the enclosed supply list and “helpful hints” to prepare for our first day. There is also a child-family history form, which helps to give me a picture of your child’s development. We can go over it in person in more detail if you prefer. Our parent handbook is available at our website at www.mountainoakschool.org . Signing up through our website to receive our weekly newsletter will encourage easier communication. There will be a family workday on Saturday, August 9th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm-it will be great opportunity to work and play together before school begins.

There are various practical needs throughout the school year, including weekly laundry, shopping, class parent and parent association representatives, helping with festivals, repairs and sewing, and joining us for our walks. Please let me know if you are interested in helping with any of this work, and we can discuss the details further at our first parent evening.

I look forward to the new school year and the opportunity to share our wonderful school community with all of you!

Ms. Jennifer McMillan



Helpful hints for the beginning of kindergarten

- Each child will have their own cubby/hook in which to store their belongings. In the kindergarten we do a lot of rigorous activity and we often get dirty, so please bring a full set of extra clothing, a sun hat and also water/mud boots. For inside the classroom we ask that the children wear soft well-fitted slippers. Please see that your child's name is on all of their belongings for these items will remain at school until needed. The parent handbook, available via our new website, has more details or you may speak to me if you have any questions.
- Each day we will provide a healthy mid-morning snack of grains served with fruits and nuts or vegetables and also fruit tea or water. We try to use organic ingredients as much as possible! Please let me know if there are any special dietary concerns we need to be aware of for your child. We will do our best to make any individual arrangements to honor your family's request. Please, also bring a water bottle with your child's name on it.
- We highly suggest that your child does not have any television, computer-screen time, or any other stimulating media, especially in the morning before school. In fact, it is the school's view that little or none at all is best. I would be glad to discuss alternatives if this is a concern, so we can make this transition easier. Finally, I encourage you to take a moment to look through the parent handbook for more information about school routine and daily rhythms. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to speak to me. I can be reached at 928-460-2218 or via my school email address <jmcmillan@mountainoakschool.org>. I will contact you to arrange for a home visit or to set a time when we can connect so that I may learn about your child i.e.: their birth, any nutritional concerns, favorite play things, siblings etc... It is going to be a fantastic year and I look forward to getting to know your child and your family!

Sunflower Kindergarten
Supply List

Personal items which will stay at school in your child's cubbie all year

Please have your child's name on these items

~ we ask these items are free of any media characters, thank you~

Full set of extra clothing

Sun hat

Soft soled inside slippers/shoes

Water bottle

Mud/snow boots and a warm winter hat*

We will not need these until the season changes, and I do have some extra boots

Supplies for community classroom needs

(these items do not need names on them)

1 box of Kleenex

1 ream of recycled white copy paper

2 bags of cough drops (Ricola or other natural kind)

1 box of band-aids

2 glue sticks

1 bottle of liquid glue

Thank you for contributing these items to our classroom community!