



Learning Land Nursery School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Learning Land Nursery School
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ABOUT LEARNING LAND

Learning Land Nursery School was established in 1962 as a small private school with a staff of two teachers. Over the years it has grown to its present size of 60 children and a staff of four trained and experienced teachers. In 1968 Learning Land was incorporated under Maine State Law as a nonprofit educational institution, and it is now run by a Board of Directors in collaboration with the Head Teacher and Office Manager. Learning Land is fully licensed by the State of Maine.

Learning Land welcomes any child between the ages of 3 and 5 and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or gender expression, national or ethnic origin, or disability.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Shannon Alsobrook

Treasurer: Marc Solebello

Secretary: Sarah Magenis

Board Members: Mariel Alexandre, Sheridon Gove, Caryn Scott, Dean Staples, David Wiggin

We encourage you to speak with a Board member if you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors or learning more about the Board's roles and responsibilities.

STAFF

Head Teacher: Bonnie Redzinak

Office Manager: Erin Vazdauskas

Teachers: Nanci Alexander, Connie Armes, Kim Basquez

Lunch Bunch Teachers: Connie Armes, Kim Basquez

Lunch Bunch Aides: Shelly Beal, Carrie Orlando, Celena Redzinak

Bonnie Redzinak is the Head Teacher at Learning Land. She was formerly the School Director. Bonnie holds a Bachelor's Degree in Speech Pathology with a minor in Psychology from Douglass College/Rutgers University. She also has a Master's Degree in Speech Pathology from Kean University. Bonnie was a teacher for ten years in New Jersey and has been teaching at Learning Land since 1996.

Erin Vazdauskas is the Office Manager at Learning Land. She was previously a Lunch Bunch aide. Erin received a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Merrimack College, and is an artist, designer and crafter with Chickadee General.

Learning Land's teachers have many years of experience in early childhood education. Their teaching philosophy centers around the belief that each child is unique and that his or her environment plays a critical factor in the development of self-esteem. The teachers strive to offer daily experiences that are creative, challenging, fun, and nurturing. State licensing also requires each teacher to continue professional trainings to keep their skills current and learn new strategies.

Our teachers are certified in CPR and First Aid and are also trained to administer an EpiPen and an asthma inhaler.

PROGRAMS AND TUITION

Learning Land provides four program options for children ages 3 to 5 that run from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM:

- 2-day program (Tuesday & Thursday) for 3 and 4 year olds
- 3-day program (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) for 3 and 4 year olds
- 4-day Pre-K program (Monday through Thursday) for students who will be eligible to attend kindergarten the following school year. Includes a group swim lesson at the Bath YMCA on Thursdays. Parents are asked to help with transportation to and from swim lessons.
- 5-day Pre-K program (Monday through Friday) for students who will be eligible to attend kindergarten the following school year.

Those families who would like additional days for younger children may have their child attend a 2-day and a 3-day program combined if they need a total of five days.

Lunch Bunch is our optional afternoon session, which runs from 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM Monday through Thursday. Students bring a nut-free lunch and rest mat and stay for afternoon fun on an occasional basis or as often as four days a week. Students may attend Lunch Bunch even if they are not attending school that morning. Each afternoon session accommodates up to 12 students and is taught by a Learning Land teacher along with a teacher's aide. The afternoon session includes lunch time, rest time, indoor and outdoor play, crafts, stories, snacks and other fun activities. Daily sign-ups for Lunch Bunch are available as space allows on a first-come, first-served basis at the rate of \$25 per afternoon. Lunch Bunch runs from 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM. If a child is picked up later than 3:00 PM, a \$10 late fee will be assessed and there will be a \$1 charge for each minute after 3:10 PM.

Students must be 3 years old on or before October 15th of the current school year to attend Learning Land. All of our classes have a low student to teacher ratio of 10:1. Children are grouped in classes according to their ages.

School is in session 34 weeks from September through late May and follows the Brunswick public school calendar for most holidays and vacations. In addition, All Aboard Adventures (AAA) Camp, our half-day summer camp, is held for three weeks in June.

Registration for returning families begins in mid-January for the following school year and continues for two weeks. Registration opens to the community afterward and continues until all classes are filled. Tours are conducted throughout the year and can be scheduled by calling or emailing the school. There is a \$55 non-refundable registration fee.

Monthly tuition beginning September 2017 is:

- \$150 for the 2-day program (\$1,350 per year)
- \$180 for the 3-day program (\$1,620 per year)
- \$245 for the 4-day program, includes the cost of swim lessons (\$2,205 per year)
- \$290 for the 5-day program (\$2,610 per year)

There is a 10% sibling discount for one sibling and a 5% discount for additional siblings.

Tuition payments are due the first day of each month. A late fee of \$10 will be assessed if payment is received after the 15th of any month. Checks can be mailed to:

Learning Land Nursery School
P.O. Box 322
Brunswick, ME 04011

Tuition payment may also be handed to the office manager or placed in the locked blue mailbox in the hallway. Returned checks are subject to a \$20 fee paid to Learning Land to cover the bank overdraft charges.

CURRICULUM

During a typical day at Learning Land your child will be encouraged to participate in a variety of activities such as:

- Circle time
- Calendar and weather
- Creative play
- Activities with manipulatives
- Individual and small group activities
- Story time
- Science and math activities
- Art, music, and dramatic play
- Fine and gross motor activities
- Outdoor play

A snack is provided daily. Teachers are always mindful of every child in the classroom, their reaction to different situations, their personality, and how best to meet their particular developmental needs. The teachers encourage creativity, independence and curiosity which will develop confidence in each child.

Our regular preschool program is augmented by field trips to locations such as Rocky Ridge Orchard, Bowdoin College Arctic Museum, Hannaford, Maine Pines, and Curtis Memorial Library. We also invite community members to visit our school to enrich our curriculum, including the Coastal Humane Society, Brunswick Firefighters and Police Officers, and Success By Six volunteer readers. Additional programming may include foreign languages, yoga, martial arts, and music classes. We also have a "Step Up Day" in the spring during which the children who will be attending kindergarten in the fall have the opportunity to ride on a school bus and take a tour of Coffin Elementary School.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Our staff appreciates the value of parent-teacher cooperation in achieving a greater understanding of each child. Open communication among teachers and parents is strongly encouraged. Parents are welcome to volunteer in the classroom in a variety of ways and invited to be an integral part of their child's preschool experience. Parent-teacher conferences take place once a year, but you may speak with your teacher at any time throughout the year if you have any questions or concerns.

We welcome and depend on families to volunteer and help in various ways throughout the year, from transportation for field trips, repairs and maintenance, to baking and setting up for special events. Volunteer opportunities are typically posted in the stairwell or publicized by the staff and/or Board of Directors.

LEARNING LAND NURSERY SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

WELLNESS POLICY

Learning Land by law maintains the standards established for nursery schools for sanitary, safety, and fire provisions. If a child becomes ill during the school day a parent or caregiver named on their emergency card will be notified. In case of an accident or emergency we are guided by your child's physician. If your physician is not available, Learning Land will be guided by our on-call physician.

Learning Land requires that a current physical report by the child's physician be filed at the school as well as a copy of your child's immunization record, prior to enrollment. Please be considerate of other children and do not send a sick child to school as the child may compromise the health of others. Kindly email or call the school if your child will not attend that day due to illness. Leave a message on the voicemail if your call is placed before or after school hours. A child returning to school after an illness should be physically able to resume the full school schedule, including outdoor play.

A child should remain home if they are experiencing any of the following health issues:

COLD or FLU - Children with flu symptoms should remain at home and away from others until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100°F / 37.8°C or greater when measured orally) without the use of fever-reducing medications. If your child has a fever in the evening, they should not come to school the next morning as a fever may recur later in the day. If a child exhibits symptoms while at school, staff will notify parents. At any sign of flu-like symptoms, the child will be sent home. Symptoms may include fever, diarrhea, persistent coughing and/or vomiting. Colds and runny noses are rampant during the winter months. If your child is sneezing and/or coughing excessively, please keep them home so they do not spread illness to others.

VOMITING - If your child vomits during the night, please do not send him or her to school the next day.

DIARRHEA - Children should not come to school until bowel movements are of normal consistency. If diarrhea persists or is accompanied by other symptoms, please consult your child's physician.

STREP THROAT - A child with strep throat may return to school after being on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

CHICKEN POX - Chicken pox are contagious from about one day before the rash breaks out to the time when all the blisters have crusted over (approximately 7 days). Children may not return to school until the contagious period has passed.

LICE - If you suspect your child has lice, you must notify the school. Since medication does not effectively kill both lice and nits (eggs), it is important to examine and remove any live bugs and nits daily. A child can return to school only after their head is clear of any live bugs and nits.

OTHER CONDITIONS - Scabies, impetigo, ringworm, pinworms and conjunctivitis must be properly treated and non-contagious before the child returns to school.

ASTHMA POLICY

Any child attending Learning Land with a diagnosis of Asthma or Reactive Airway Disease must have an up-to-date Asthma Action/Management Plan with their medical information on file prior to the first day of school. If your child's doctor changes this Asthma Plan during the course of the year, please provide the office with an updated form. The appropriate form may be obtained from the office or downloaded from the school website on the School Forms page. Any child with Asthma or Reactive Airway Disease having symptoms requiring the use of a rescue inhaler must provide the inhaler and spacer to the office for the day it may be needed. If your child with Asthma or Reactive Airway Disease is sick enough to require a nebulizer treatment they should be kept home until their symptoms improve. For associated illnesses please refer to the school's Wellness Policy.

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

At Learning Land, every effort is made to accommodate children with a variety of food allergies. Any child attending Learning Land with a food allergy diagnosis must have an up-to-date Food Allergy Emergency Care Plan with their medical information on file prior to the first day of school. If your child's doctor changes this Food Allergy Plan during the course of the year, please provide the office with an updated form. The appropriate form may be obtained from the office or downloaded from the school website on the School Forms page. Along with your child's Food Allergy Emergency Care Plan, all appropriate medications must be provided to the child's teacher every day the child is at school.

NUT-FREE POLICY

Learning Land has a nut-free policy to ensure the safety of all children. Foods that contain nuts, or may contain traces of nuts, are not to be included in ANY child's food while at school. Should a child bring food containing nuts to school, the food containing nuts will be taken away and sent back home in the child's backpack. Unless the parent gives instruction otherwise, the teacher will give the child a substitute snack.

SNACK POLICY

Learning Land is a 5-2-1-0 school. 5-2-1-0 Goes to School is a program aimed at increasing healthy eating and physical activity in the school environment. A snack is offered daily to each child. Families are encouraged to donate fruit or a healthy snack for your child's class. If your child has any food allergies, it is your responsibility to notify the school and your child's classroom teacher. Occasionally, the class will cook something for a snack. You are welcome to provide a special snack for the class in recognition of your child's birthday. Please notify your child's teacher if you plan to do this. Since the timing of the snack is prior to lunch, Learning Land encourages parents to provide a healthy snack for birthdays or other special occasions.

SNOW DAYS / NO SCHOOL POLICY

Learning Land follows the Brunswick School Department's decision regarding closure due to weather. Announcements are made on local radio and television stations as well as their websites. Learning Land will also make every effort to notify families of school closures via email and the school's Facebook page. If schools in Brunswick are delayed one hour, Learning Land will also have a one-hour delayed start (school will start at 9:55 AM rather than 8:55 AM). If schools in Brunswick are delayed by two hours, Learning Land will be closed for the day.

EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY

If severe weather conditions develop during the school day, or an emergency situation arises, it may be necessary to dismiss the students early and cancel Lunch Bunch. Learning Land follows the Brunswick School Department's decision regarding early dismissal due to weather. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to check the Brunswick School Department website, local television, or listen to the radio for announcements concerning changes in the Brunswick School District schedule. If there is an emergency specific only to Learning Land, the staff will make every effort to contact parents/caregivers as soon as possible. Therefore, it is important for parents to fill out the emergency card and have it on file with Learning Land. Please inform the school of any changes throughout the year.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURE

Fire drills are conducted for each class once a month using our two means of exit. Fire drill exit time is recorded and posted on the bulletin board in the office. Teachers will initial the Fire Drill Log. The Head Teacher will report each fire drill to the Board of Directors at the monthly board meetings.

PLAYGROUND POLICY

The Learning Land playground is an extension of the classroom. For the safety of everyone we ask that when preschoolers are present, siblings and others please refrain from using the playground. Learning Land families are welcome to enjoy the playground before and after school hours when classes are not in session.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Learning Land welcomes any child between the ages of 3 and 5 and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or gender expression, national or ethnic origin, or disability.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

At Learning Land we strive to establish an optimum learning environment which fosters the emotional, social, and physical development of young children. We observe the way each child interacts with the rest of the class, and make efforts to correct behaviors which prevent teachers from maintaining a positive and safe learning environment for the class as a whole. Teachers are required to document behavior problems and work with the Head Teacher to identify corrective action. When behavior problems prevent teachers and other staff from carrying out their daily responsibilities, Learning Land reserves the right to request parental intervention, require class reassignment, or dismiss the student from Learning Land programs.

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

While Learning Land is a private non-profit nursery school with limited resources, we are committed to serving all children including children with disabilities. The Head Teacher and classroom teacher will work with each family to make a case-by-case assessment of a child's individual needs to determine reasonable accommodations. As part of an individual assessment and to ensure that families do not encounter any barriers, Learning Land will gather and review relevant information about each child so that every effort can be made to provide the reasonable accommodations needed to allow the child an equal opportunity to participate in our programs.

We will make a good faith effort to make the necessary accommodations including modifications to physical barriers that are readily achievable and would not require much difficulty or monetary expense, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of our program or pose an undue burden. We will work collaboratively with outside agencies to support an individual child's need for additional services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapies. If it is determined that a child requires a qualified aide for support in our program, the child's family will incur the expense necessary to conduct a background check and employ an aide, approved by the school, during the hours needed. We will continue to work with families to jointly assess a child's enrollment and participation in Learning Land. If it is determined that Learning Land is unable to support the child by providing reasonable accommodations, we will work with the child's family to discuss alternative programs and a transition plan.

BATHROOM POLICY

Learning Land expects that students will be toilet trained prior to the start of school. However, we recognize that toilet training is a process and that there are different developmental stages within that process. It is Learning Land's policy that staff shall provide limited bathroom assistance to students if needed. Please review the policy carefully and contact the school with any questions or concerns.

- We strongly recommend that all students wear nonrestrictive clothing that can be independently managed for toileting needs.
- Underwear and disposable training pants (pull-ups) are both acceptable undergarments for students.
- Learning Land staff provides "distant supervision" in the bathroom. Distant supervision is defined as: staff being able to observe students entering and exiting the bathroom and office staff is within hearing distance should a student request assistance while in the bathroom.
- Should a student request assistance while in the bathroom, Learning Land staff will assist students with clothing management and/or personal hygiene. For the safety and protection of students, parents will be notified each time their child receives assistance with personal hygiene. Please notify the school if you do not want your child to receive assistance with personal hygiene.
- If a student consistently requests assistance with clothing and/or hygiene, staff will work with the child's family to increase the child's independence in the bathroom.
- Should a student wet or soil their clothing, the parent will be notified and the child will be changed into clean clothing.
- If your child has any special needs related to bathroom use, please inform the school and your child's classroom teacher prior to the start of school.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

There is a security system on the entrance door which has a keypad and a video monitor. There is a keyed lock on the back door to the school. The front door system allows entrance to the school for monitored drop-off from 8:55 to 9:15 AM. At that time the door will be locked from the outside (we have the ability to open the door from the inside to practice fire drills and go outdoors). To gain access when the door is locked, please knock, ring the bell and/or speak into the camera and someone will come and open it for you. Please be patient as we may be busy. The door will reopen again at 11:25 AM for pick-up during the regular school day and then again at 2:55 PM for Lunch Bunch pick-up.

In the event that we have to evacuate the school, the children will be guided by the staff and walked to the Hawthorne School at 46 Federal Street. There, we will have access to the cafeteria and restrooms. You will be notified to come and pick up your child from that location.

During school hours, children sent to office by their teacher will be received with a verbal acknowledgment from the office staff or volunteer. The teacher will alert the office and inform them that the child is on their way to ensure a safe transition to and from the classroom.

For the safety of our students, no changes in a child's dismissal routine will be allowed without written or verbal notification from the family to the office and classroom teacher. At the close of school, any individual who is not the usual caregiver or listed on the child's emergency card as an approved guardian must sign the child out. There is a sign-out sheet for each classroom.

Water safety is in place for our 4-day class that participates in a 30-minute lesson once a week at the Bath YMCA. The Bath YMCA is staffed with certified lifeguards. The YMCA swim instructors and the classroom teacher are all water safety-trained and in the water with the students at all times.

Learning Land carries personal liability insurance for each child while they are at school.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Under Maine law, Learning Land staff must report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) if they know of or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected. The staff will discuss and document their concerns with the Head Teacher and the Head Teacher will contact DHHS to file a report.

LICENSING VIOLATIONS POLICY

Any person or professional who reasonably believes that the rules pertaining to a child's rights and the conduct of childcare have been violated, must report this information to the Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services.