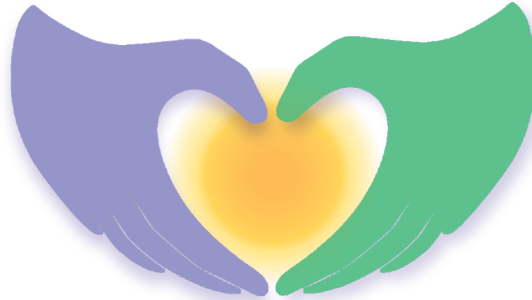


Heart and Hands



WALDORF PLAYGARDEN

PARENT HANDBOOK

“When you nurture a child’s heart and hand’s, you give them wings to fly.”
-Julie Yarnall

It is a great joy for me to welcome you. We are beginning together a journey through childhood. This program is not mine with you as the guest; it is in fact a creation of what we all bring together. I welcome your input, ideas, thoughts, and assistance in the creation of this program and the space in which it operates.

This handbook is intended to provide you with an opportunity to become familiar with our program, philosophy and policies. Please read it...and welcome! We’re glad you could join us.

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About Heart and Hands

Heart and Hands is a Waldorf-inspired, year-round program for children ages 15 months to six years. The director, Julie Yarnall is a trained Waldorf teacher and has her Master's Degree in Waldorf Education. Our mission at Heart and Hands is to assist parents in rearing healthy, self-reliant children. We are dedicated to the healthy development of young children in a warm and loving environment. We recognize the uniqueness of each individual. Our hope is to lay a foundation for a healthy adult attitude by developing a child's sense of beauty, wonder, and interest in the world in which we live. Program emphasis is on creative play, self care, artistic endeavors, imagination, positive social interaction and practical life activities that increase the child's creativity, social skills and quality of play.

Our preschool is affiliated with the following organizations:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN)
- Life Ways Centers of North America (Lifeways)
- Sonoma County Childcare Association (SCCA)

Our program and policies are all designed to help us create a harmonious, beautiful environment in which children can play and learn. The outside space and classroom atmosphere, and all the details that help to shape it are extremely important to your child's experience. We hope you will view our policies and guidelines as positive ways to help ensure your child's safety, happiness, and growth in these formative early school years.

History

Where did it happen? When did it happen? Where and when did it not happen? Once upon a time, many years ago now, Julie Yarnall got her driver's license and would travel as much as she could from Los Angeles, from whence she hails to the Northern lands of CA. There was just something about the beauty and way of life in Northern CA that called to her. On one of her visits to a little town called Petaluma, she had the chance to visit a small little school called Heart and Hands and they fell in love. Was it the towering Redwood trees that stand as guardians of the space or the magical nooks and crannies that are all about? She doesn't know to this day but there was a sense of such awe and wonder and a relationship was seeded. Many years later when Julie moved from Los Angeles to Petaluma to teach Kindergarten at Live Oak Charter School, the seed began to sprout. Dreams of owning her own school began to knock at her heart. Julie knew that she could never open a preschool of her very own as long as Heart and Hands was open as she never wanted to be in competition with Donyu, the previous owner, and then life took an interesting twist. One day a little bird whispered in Julie's ear that Heart and Hands was closing and she knew that this could never been the case. She knew how long it had been there and how many families had been served. Julie contacted Donyu and the two met up in the Knitterly, the local yarn shop and dreams started formulating and taking more shape. A new vision and dream was taking form.....

Julie took over ownership in September of 2015 and Donyu Catino has moved to Oregon. Knowing that Julie had big shoes to fill, she worked with Donyu through the transition, taking in all she could. Donyu is a long time master Waldorf teacher as well as so many other marvelous things. She wears many, many hats and Hearts and Hands was her dream, as well as Julie's so it simply must succeed! The foundation for Heart and Hands was laid and opened 27 years ago and there is a lot of rich history there.....the children are digging up old treasures every day! The house and preschool are the work of Donyu and her dear husband Ezra and are such a work of art. The Catino's daughters both attended Heart and Hand's and it was a true family endeavor. And so it goes.....Heart and Hand's lives on through the current vision of Julie Yarnall.

Julie taught preschool for many years before going back to college to earn her BA and CA teaching credential. After graduating from college, she taught public school in Inglewood, CA for 3 years and then decided that teaching in that form was not for her. She was searching for a new career path and that was when she discovered Waldorf Education and her life was forever changed. That was 13 years ago now. Since that time Julie has earned 2 Master's degrees, one in Early Childhood Education, and the other in Waldorf Education. She is Waldorf certified to teach the grades, Handwork, and Early Childhood Education. She taught grades 1-3 at Ocean Charter School in Los Angeles, and Kindergarten and Handwork, grades 1-8 at Live Oak Charter School in Petaluma.

Julie is beyond excited to be on this new path with Heart and Hands. It is a dream come true! Heart and Hands is the first step in a bigger picture that unfolds each day.

The school year runs year-round and the school is open from 7:30-5:30 Monday-Friday except for scheduled school closings as noted on the school calendar. The school accepts children from ages 15 months-6 years.

Currently enrolled children and their siblings will have first priority for available spots.

Admission

Heart and Hands retains the rights to make decisions regarding admission based on the needs of the individual children and/or the larger school community. Parents are required to meet with the director (Ms. Julie) prior to enrollment to take a tour of the school and obtain an admissions packet.

After being accepted into the school the family must sign their Care Agreement/Contract, stating that they are in alignment with the policies and beliefs outlined in the contract, as well as this handbook. All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, registration fees paid, and accounts current prior to the child's first day of attendance and/or the first day of the new school year.

Hours & Monthly Tuition Schedule

Full Time*		Preschool Morning*	
7:45 am – 5:30 pm		8:00 am – 12:30 pm	
\$870 - \$1,130	5 Days	\$655 - \$725	
\$725 - \$920	4 Days	\$545 - \$590	
\$550 - \$705	3 Days	\$420 - \$455	
\$380 - \$480	2 Days	\$300 - \$310	

* You're welcome to drop off and pick up your child at any point during your contracted time slot. This spot is reserved for your child, providing you with the flexibility to use as much or as little as fits your needs.

Heart and Hands works out of a sliding scale model so that you can choose the rate that works best for your family. Please choose the rate that best suits your needs.

Fees are on a sliding scale and are adjusted yearly. Tuition payments are equal from month to month and should not reflect holidays or vacation closures. Payments are due monthly in advance of service and are due on or before the 1st of every month. Cash or checks made out to Heart and Hands are accepted. Late payments will receive a \$25.00 monthly fee. Pick-up after closing without notice and approval will receive a \$25.00 per quarter hour fee. A registration fee of \$150 is due upon enrollment and a yearly fee of \$150 is due each August thereafter. You may extend care on an as needed basis as openings permit for an additional fee.

Withdrawal

If you choose to withdrawal your child from Heart and Hands, a 30 day notice must be given in writing and full payment for the 30 days must be made, whether or not the child attends school.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Photographic Release

Heart and Hands may use videos/and or photographs of your child in the school's promotional materials. If you do not want us to use your child's videos and/or photographs for promotional purposes, you must submit a request in writing. By signing the Care Agreement/Contract you agree to these terms of use.

Holiday Closures

As you will note on the following “Calendar” page, Heart and Hands will be closed on the major holidays, and two week break in both the winter and summer. Monthly fees are not pro-rated for family vacations, illness, missed days, holidays, or closures.

If we must be away due to illness, workshops, training or travel, we will bring in substitute staff members, volunteers, or combination thereof. If you need substitute care due to your child’s illness or to our planned closure, payment for that care is your responsibility.

Calendar

More events may be added to the year as parent interest supports

AUGUST

- Yearly fee due. \$150
- Crowning Day (Monday before the start of kindergarten): Families gather in the late afternoon and the parents mingle while Ms. Julie talks to the soon-to-be kindergartners about their upcoming transition and that they always have a space at Hart & Hands. Following a celebratory parade of the kindergartners, families gather for a potluck meal
- School is closed August 31-September 7.

SEPTEMBER

- Labor Day, closed
- First day of school September 8.
- Celebratory Gathering Friday September 18th at 5:30, Potluck.
- Parent Evening September 24th at 6:00

OCTOBER

- Pumpkin Patch Family Farm Field Trip (TBA).
- Parent Evening October 22 at 6:00

- Halloween celebration October 30th, children are welcome to bring costumes to school.

NOVEMBER

- Lantern walk, November 13th 5:30 pm
- November 19th Parent Evening at 6:00
- Thanksgiving Break, we are closing at 12:30 Wednesday the 25th, and we are closed Thursday the 26th and Friday the 27th.

DECEMBER

- Winter Spiral (TBA)
- Parent Evening December 10th at 6:00
- Potluck gathering and holiday singing December 18th at 5:30.
- Winter Break, closed December 24-January 3rd.

JANUARY

- Martin Luther King Day, closed
- Parent Evening January 21st at 6:00.

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 19th 10:00 am, Valentine's Day Tea, for grandparents & children.
- Presidents Day, Feb. 15th, closed
- Feb. 25th Parent Evening 6:00

MARCH

- Parent Evening March 17th
- Spring break, closed March 25th-April 3

APRIL

- Spring Celebration April 16th 1:00, Wickersham Park.
- April 21st Parent Evening 6:00

MAY

- Mother's Day Tea Friday May 6th at 10:00
- Parent Evening May 26th at 6:00
- Memorial Day, closed

JUNE

- Father's Day barbeque June 17th at 11:30.
- Parent Evening June 23rd at 6:00

JULY

- July 4-8 closed

Although Heart and Hands staff will be present at festivals and school events, children are considered to be under the supervision of their parents or designated caregivers and are expected to be respectful of the school space, just as they are when attending a school day.

Daily Schedule

If your child attends in the morning, it is helpful that they arrive by 9:00 for circle time as it helps to ground the children and acknowledge who is present on a given day.

7:30 School opens

7:30-9:00 Inside play time/cooking

9:00 Circle

9:15 Morning snack

9:30-11:00 Outdoor play time/arts and craft

11:00 Clean up time

11:15 Puppet Show

11:30 Lunch

12:30 Nap time (older children stay outside to play and do many different activities)

3:00 Wake up time

3:30 Afternoon snack

3:30-5:30 Outdoor playtime/arts and crafts/teacher led games

5:30 Afternoon Pick up/School closes

Absence

If your child will be absent from school, please call the school (or email julieheartandhands@gmail.com) by 8:30 am so that we can plan accordingly and know that your child is safe. We appreciate knowing of planned absences in advance as well.

Neighborhood Walks

Our neighborhood provides a safe and wonderful place to take neighborhood walks. It is often nice to leave the school and note the changing of the seasons happening all around us. There is a lovely outdoor-forested spot that we often like to hike to. You signed a walking permission slip form in your enrollment packet. If you arrive at the school and we are not there, there will always be a sign on the door telling you where to come and find us.

Lines of Communication

Communication is key in any situation. We welcome your questions and input. Ask us how the day has been like for your child...more than likely we'll have some fun anecdote to share! When issues or concerns arise, please talk with us. Small problems are best solved before they become larger. It is our hope to build a community that truly knows and cares for one another. We want Heart and Hands to feel like a second home to you and this can only be achieved through openness and clear communication. We hope that a misunderstanding will never create problems, so please talk with us to clarify. If you do need to talk with us, call and leave a message, send an email, drop off a note in the morning, or set up an appointment. If you are having an issue with any area pertaining to Heart and Hands, please, please come to the director, Ms. Julie and talk about it. It is best to work on issues sooner than later! Ongoing, open communication between parents and teachers is vital to your child's well-being. If teachers know that your child didn't sleep well the previous night, or is upset over a lost pet, for example, they can do a better job of understanding and meeting the child's needs. Please keep us informed about any major changes in your child's home life, and any other events that might be affecting him or her. Please don't hesitate to let us know any other concerns you might have about your child.

Please let us know of changes in your child's life. If phone numbers, household members or other things change, update your paperwork promptly.

HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS

- Email Newsletters – periodically sent out with information regarding upcoming activities, festivals, reminders of school closure dates, and other pertinent information. Please take the time to read them as they will contain information we would like you to have.
- Parent Teacher Conferences – not planned for a set month. If you wish to meet, let us know, and we will do the same. If you have a special topic you wish to cover at the conference let us know in advance. All conferences are scheduled during operating hours.
- Each day, notes or verbal communication from teachers keep you informed about your child's daily activities and experiences at school. Heart and Hands also keeps a blog, found on the website at www.heartandhandspetaluma.com (under "news") where you can find pictures of the days and all of the fun happening!
- Occasionally there will be messages posted on the fence or doors to remind you of events coming up at Heart and Hands.

HOW TO REACH US

- **PHONE: 707-763-5018** Phone calls will be answered when the call can be taken without disrupting our activities. If you don't reach us, please leave a message or call back later. Messages are picked up at 7:45 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.
- **EMAIL julieheartandhands@gmail.com**
Email is a great way to reach us. We try to check it every morning and at naptime. It is our goal to get back to you promptly.

HOME VISITS

Home visits will happen on an as needed basis. There are a variety of reasons why the director might ask if you are comfortable with her to come to your home. Sometimes a child is not seeming as comfortable as they can at school, and are not seeming to fully be able to be themselves and live up to their full potential. There is great wonder in what a home visit can do for a child! Sometimes when the teacher takes the time to come and see the child in their own home, great shifts can happen. These visits typically last only 30 minutes or so and have proved to be great opportunities again and again!

STAFFING:

Our teaching staff is made up of very loyal and caring teachers. All of our teachers have a background in education and many have taken Early Childhood certification classes. They are all very dedicated to the teaching profession and are willing to participate in the Heart and Hands mission, vision, and value of the school. All teachers are willing to participate in on-going professional development courses as they arise.

Parent Involvement

We appreciate and encourage parent participation in our program. Parent interest and involvement is an essential part of teaching children how important learning and education is as well as their importance as people. Unfortunately, in the preschool environment, in-class volunteering generally does not have the desired effect. Since separation is still very much an issue, children who know a parent is present will test boundaries and limits at the expense of all present.

Nevertheless, we welcome and encourage your ideas for participation. The reason something is not being done may be only because no one has thought of it. This is your school—please help make it the best it can be. In the past parents have participated in the following ways:

- Craft projects: either a one-time activity or a project over several days
- Gardening: taking a child or two with them to participate in planting, weeding, watering or harvesting.
- Cooking projects: making a favorite dish with the children
- Building or change things in the yard (we also have annual work days)
- Offering assistance to the staff with marketing or other projects
- Seasonal/holiday celebrations: these gatherings are a foundation for our community and we support families in planning and carrying out these events.

You are always welcome to come unannounced when your child is present. We invite families to visit and relax in the yard, as the children love seeing you enjoy the space. Bring a book to read to the children or sing a song with them. Teachers may not always be able to sit and talk or visit as they have work to do. However, we ask that you be respectful of our routine. If we are involved in a focused activity (circle, story, etc.) when you arrive, please stay back and do not interrupt. Please tread lightly as we are often in the midst of a delicate situation, like sitting down for lunch, or preparing for story time. Please also note that if you come for a visit in the middle of your child's day, you may need to take your child with you if a second departure proves too hard for them emotionally.

Anytime you are in the classroom, including morning drop off time, we ask that you remember that this is a child's environment. This means that we as adults are asked to withdraw our personalities to a certain degree and that our speech is soft and direct. The teachers' foremost responsibility in the classroom is to attend to the interactions of the children, and sometimes there may be little opportunity for conversation with parents.

If you would like any recommendations on Waldorf style books to read, pertaining to certain interest areas, please just ask!

Parent Evenings

Parent evenings are not mandatory but they are aimed at enhancing you and your child's experience while attending Heart and Hands. We will gather once a month (except July and August) to discuss important topics pertaining to Waldorf Education and childhood in general. It is my hope that you have chosen Heart and Hands for your child because it is your desire to continue on with Waldorf Education long after your days at Heart and Hands. Julie has had a lot of experience with Waldorf elementary schools and can share a wealth of knowledge with you. Attending a tour at Live Oak, our local Waldorf public charter school will help you to see what the larger Waldorf picture is about. Attending parent meetings will help you to also bring Waldorf into your home. These evenings will also allow you to get to know the community that makes up Heart and Hands. Please come. The meetings will be informative as well as fun, and we will have yummy snacks!

There will also be ample opportunities for parents to participate in crafting groups and projects. Announcements about these opportunities will come out in monthly newsletters.

Festivals

Heart and Hands will follow the traditional Waldorf calendar in terms of festivals that we celebrate together. In the Waldorf tradition it is wonderful to come together as a community and celebrate the changing of a season or the celebration of something. Please note the festivals that we will celebrate throughout the year on our calendar page.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and the beliefs of children, families, staff, and community. We welcome and encourage families to share important traditions, keeping in mind the cultural and traditional aspects of the celebration instead of the material and commercial aspects. Art projects and celebrations surrounding various holidays will be a part of the school year and all families are welcome to choose their level of participation.

Pets

We currently have 6 chickens and 4 rabbits on campus and this number could change any day. We have two therapy dogs that visit occasionally. It is important that children be exposed to and know how to develop relationships with animals. Teachers watch the interactions between children and animals very carefully but animals can bite, peck, or scratch when scared or agitated. If this were to happen at school, depending on the severity, you would be notified immediately, or upon pick up.

Arrival, Departures & Parking

ARRIVALS

Upon arrival each day, please make verbal and visual contact with a staff member, informing them of the child's arrival and well-being. Please say hello to all of the staff members within eye site, providing a good model for the children.

If your child is uncomfortable with the idea of your departure, take time to read a book and hang out for a few minutes. Find out what works best for your child and do that consistently to establish an expected routine the child can find comfort in. Departure goes best if it is not rushed or hurried. If your child is upset when you are leaving, chances are that it will not go on for long. In cases where a child is severely distressed, a phone call will be made to discuss the circumstances.

It is very important that children are never allowed to unlatch the gate or climb over the deck fencing. It is crucial that they learn that only a teacher or an adult is allowed to open the gate. A gate left open accidentally could result in an injury or even a fatality if we are not extremely careful. Adults who pass through the gate must make sure they lock the gate behind them. We exist on a very busy street and it is imperative that we be extremely careful to ensure the safety of all.

DEPARTURES

At the end of the day, visual and verbal contact must be made with a staff member before removing the child from the premises. All persons picking up children must be authorized to do so in writing in advance by a parent or be identified on your emergency release contact form. If we do not know the person, they must have photo ID. This is for the protection of the child and is required by law.

All parents must arrive by 12:30 pm, promptly for morning pick-ups and 5:30 pm for afternoon pick-ups. If you are going to be late, please call at the first opportunity. It is crucial that parents are on time due to the changing numbers of

children per staff member. The 12:30 pick up time is a crucial one as some children are going inside to take a nap, some are playing outside on the yard, and some are just arriving for the second half of the day.

When you pick up a car seat, install it first, and then pick up the child. Do not leave children unattended in your car. Drive slowly and always watch for children!

Pick up is a fine time to visit with other parents, read a book to the children, or spend time here. Do not feel the need to rush.

CHILD CUSTODY

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has the legal custody where there is no court documentation.

RIGHT TO REFUSE CHILD RELEASE

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child.

PARKING

Please respect our neighbors and try your best to park in front of our house only. The designated space for Hearts and Hands reach from the house driveway on the left hand side of the house to the driveway in front of the fence on the right side of the redwood tree. Please do not park across the street, in the fire lane, or in front of the fire hydrant. It is also nice to park on another block and walk in to school. This provides the child with a bit of an out breath before coming into the classroom, something that many children could benefit from.

Food

Mealtime is a social experience for the children, as well as a nutritional one. Together we give thanks for the food and join together to share in the bounty. The

children learn to serve themselves and others, to pour milk and water, and enjoy time together at the table. Many are the meals that the children help to prepare: they learn to cut with knives and to peel and grate. They knead dough, and stir and measure.

At mealtime, some of the children and a teacher work together to sweep off the tables and get ready for the meal. After hand washing, the children help to carry out the supplies and find their seats. The children rest their heads on the table for a few minutes to collect themselves, then stretch, join in singing the blessing, and begin the meal.

Lunch is a meal in which the children are served while they are all gathered at the table. At snack one child is chosen to help serve drinks to the other children. Those who need monitoring/assistance sit in front of the teacher and the others to the side.

The children are encouraged to eat as much as they can and if they do not care for something, they are asked to take a “no thank you” bite. The thought is that “no thank you” bites usually turn out to be favorites of the children in time. At the end of the meal the children are asked to be excused and are released a few at a time to maintain a sense of calm. Leftover water is poured on to the nearby thirsty plants, then the child clears their dishes, sorting cups and bowls into dish pans. Faces and hands are washed with a wet warm washcloth. The children are then excused to go and play for a few more minutes before nap or pick up time.

POLICIES

In general, please do not send food from home for your child for consumption during communal meal times. Meal times are an “everybody” time. After an initial period of adjustment, even the most difficult of eaters tend to eat well in a group. If you would like to send in fruit, snacks, or treats to share with everyone, it is gratefully appreciated.

Breakfast is by far the most important meal of the day. Please make sure your child has finished his/her breakfast before arriving in the morning.

MEAL SCHEDULE

9:15 am	Morning Snack
11:30 am	Lunch
3:30 pm	Afternoon Snack

MENU

We use eggs, milk, meat and cheeses. We try for wholesome meals that are simple and low in sugar. We always have whole grains and fresh vegetables, organic whenever possible.

The lunch menu is as follows:

Monday: Oatmeal, fresh blueberries, raisins, yogurt, and maple syrup

Tuesday: Fried rice with bacon, vegetables, and eggs

Wednesday: Grilled cheese sandwiches and tomato soup or apple sauce

Thursday: Apple crisp and hard-boiled eggs

Friday: Pizza and fruit or vegetables

Snacks contain a grain product (such as bread, corn tortilla or home made muffins), a protein (such as hard boiled egg, cheese or nuts), and one produce products (such as apples, carrots, celery, pears, oranges, etc.).

We are enrolled in the Federal Food Program through the Community Child Care Council (4Cs) and so some of the content of our meals is dictated through them. They also check our menus monthly and premises quarterly.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

If your child has a food allergy, we will need a note from a doctor stating the allergy or other medical reason. The letter will be kept in the child's file and a copy will be sent to the 4Cs for inclusion in the food program records. Parents who prefer that their child not drink cow milk must provide a note from their doctor. The doctor's note is a Federal Food Program requirement. We will work within reason to accommodate dietary restrictions. A parent may bring alternate types of milk for their child.

SPECIAL MEALS & CELEBRATIONS

Occasionally we will have special meals together where the parents will be asked to send in something special, for example a vegetable for soup day. You will be notified via parent newsletter about these special days.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthday celebrations are so special to the children. It is his or her most important "festival." Birthdays give us an opportunity to note the passage of time, much like the changing of the seasons. Some of the older children begin anticipating their celebrations several months in advance. Although the minutes, hours, weeks, and months have no real meaning to children so young, achieving a new age is an excellent milestone! Two weeks prior to your child's birthday, please help us to set a date for the celebration, known as the birthday circle. The children will bake a cake and whip some cream for the birthday child. We will sing a special song and

eat cake together. Parents are welcome to attend the birthday celebration! We ask that parents bring in un-whipped whip cream and berries for the top of the birthday cake.

Illness / Medications / Emergencies

ILLNESS

Sick children are best cared for in their home. This is an active place and not a good environment for a sick child. Heart and Hands does not provide sick childcare. Your child must remain home if s/he displays symptoms of illness including but not limited to fever, diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy, infectious conditions, unusual level of irritability, etc. Children must remain home until they are symptom free. By keeping children home when they are ill, the spread of illness among our school community is greatly reduced. This means fewer illness for children, teachers, parents, and other family members, fewer visits to the doctor, and fewer days lost work for parents.

Your child should remain home when:

- Vomiting—two or more times in 24 hours
- Rash, lice, nits—especially with a fever or itching
- Diarrhea—three or more watery stools in 24 hours
- Eye infection—thick mucus or pus draining from the eye
- Sore throat—with fever or swollen glands
- Lethargy—unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, confused or cranky
- Fever—temperature of 100°F or more taken under the arm

Please contact us with information when your child is ill so that we can let families know when a contagious illness is running through the school. We like to know why your children are not at school on their scheduled days!

Scratches and scrapes are inevitable when children play and will be treated with basic first aid. For anything more serious, you will be notified at once.

MEDICINE

Prescription medication of any kind will only be administered with a “Permission to Administer Medication” form from your physician and a written note from parents giving permission to administer. The medication must be in the original container, be current, and list the doses and times on the label. Non-prescription medications will not be administered.

EMERGENCIES

In the case of an emergency or natural disaster, we will follow the lead of the Petaluma School District in closures. If the event occurs during school time, we will keep the children here, as we have adequate food and supplies. If the building is uninhabitable, we will walk or drive the children to the nearest designated major care facility (Fire station, City Hall, etc.). Local radio stations would carry information listing these facilities, and we will post on the gate the information concerning the whereabouts of our group.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid is administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g. a scraped knee). You will receive verbal notification explaining what happened and the course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. A first aid kit is located just outside of the kitchen.

BITING

As upsetting as it can be for children and adults, biting is a normal stage of development that is common among young children. Most young children bite and/or are bitten by another child at least once when they are in-group care settings. Often, whether their child was the child who bit or the child who was bitten, parents experience strong emotional reactions towards biting. There are many reasons that children bite. When it does happen, our first response is to take action immediately to provide appropriate care for the child who was bitten. We also respond to the child who has bitten with strategies designed to help him/her learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus is not on punishment for biting but on developing effective behaviors that address the reasons for biting. Notification of a biting incident is given in written or verbal form to both the family of the child who was bitten and the child who bit. Each case will be handled as needed and our goal is to work with families to keep them informed and to develop strategies to address the situation.

LOST OR MISSING CHILD

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group either at the school, on a walk, or on a field trip, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 5 minutes, 911 will be called and the family notified.

EVACUATION OF SCHOOL

In the event of an emergency at the school, such as fire, gas leak, or other emergency requiring evacuation of the premises, evacuation of students and teachers would occur in the following manner:

- Director gives evacuation order, or the fire alarm is sounded.
- Director contacts authorities by calling 911.
- Teachers in class evacuate students from building according to procedures practiced in regular drills.
- Teachers proceed away from the school to a safe place and take a head count.
- Director takes contact information binder from school.
- If possible, Director places message on school indicating evacuation and location of evacuation.
- Children are kept at the evacuation site until an adult from their contact list picks them up.
- Staff members will remain until all students have been collected.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency determines appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

FIRE SAFETY

Heart and Hands is equipped with a fire extinguisher. The Petaluma Fire Department comes out once a year to conduct an annual fire inspection.

What your child should bring to school

On your child's first day, please bring a pair of slippers to wear inside the classroom. Your child's slippers will stay at school. Your child will also need a few changes of clothes that will be left at school and kept inside the classroom in a box with your child's name on it. Your child will also need a pillow if he/she naps

and a table and a tablemat for their seat when they are eating. If your child is in diapers you will need to bring a 3-week supply.

Learning Environment

Heart and Hands is a Waldorf influenced environment. Most of the learning that the children are experiencing is done through play. For children experience is learning. As renowned early childhood expert Bev Boss states, “If it’s not in the hand, it can not be in the brain.” Learning is a complex process, a result of the interaction of a child’s thinking and their experiences. Maturation contributes to this learning, creating a framework for the learning process and enabling new skills to be acquired. As children grow physically, their ability to explore their world is increased. As they grow mentally, their ability to understand the point of view of others develops. Their physical and cognitive experiences strengthen the learning process.

Children gather knowledge from the physical and social world they live in. They learn from playful interactions with both people and objects. Therefore, it is essential to create an environment that is safe, stimulating, and inviting. Heart and Hands is a place where children can be children. It is a safe haven and a place for children to unwind from the business of the media influenced outside world.

Staff are present as models, guides, facilitators, and observers in support of the children’s learning. We plan and alter our environment with information we gain from observing the children. As the teachers observe, they can ask the children questions, bring in additional challenges, and incite further learning. Studies show that when learning is relevant, children are more likely to persist with a task and be motivated. They will explore and learn more. Our experience supports the current research demonstrates that children learn best kinetically.

General goals for the children and the program include:

- Develop good self advocacy skills
- Encourage social skills and empathy
- Foster positive self concept
- Develop social skills
- Encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment
- Encourage language development
- Enhance cognitive skills
- Enhance physical development and skills
- Encourage and demonstrate sound health and safety
- Encourage creative expression and appreciation for the arts

- Respect cultural diversity of staff and children
- Experience imaginative and creative play on a daily basis

Our staff provides materials and time for children to select their own activities during the day, while respecting the child's right to choose not to participate at times.

While we do have plans for activities and also work with emergent curriculum, this means we primarily plan based on the children's interest. In working collaboratively with the children we can support their interest in exploring, while also help them develop academic competencies and foundational skills in literacy and math within relevant contexts that support their cognitive, physical and social emotional development.

Our curriculum is not just the planned activities, but also our daily schedule. There is rhythm to everything that we do. The structure that the schedule provides for the children reinforces the safe environment that stimulates their creativity and exploration. Social interactions and transitions are learning opportunities. Even the routine tasks of living and how we implement them are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children's learning, self-help, and social skills.

Most of all, we are committed to the process always being more important than the product. Playing is the most important thing that your children can do.

HEART AND HANDS AS A PLAY BASED PROGRAM

Play is an act of imagining. When children go outside to play—running, skipping, jumping, digging in the sandbox, picking flowers—what is activated is a different form of knowing. It is a way of believing that allows children, if they wish, to run as fast as the wind or to jump as high as the clouds. They become in an instant a part of the exuberance and playfulness of nature itself.

In more solitary forms of play—be it a child playing alone in the sand box, or having a conversation with a doll—the imagination is now, through its own resources, still play. It is creating, pretending, performing and bringing the child into a space of her unique knowing and understanding. Even our own adult imagining is a form of play. When we imagine, dream in reality, time and space, feeling and thought begin to intertwine, blending components that reflect who we are and how we interpret the wondrously complex world around us.

The philosophy of Heart and Hands is firmly rooted in the Waldorf tradition of a natural materials play based environment. Our daily rhythm is focused more on

deep play by leaving the middle of the day open for creative free play both indoors and out. The teacher-directed portions of the day (circle time, group table activities, story time, and meals) are now concentrated at the beginning and end of each preschool day to allow for the longest possible stretch of creative free play mid-morning. This emphasis on play in our day ensures that even children who arrive later or depart earlier in the day still receive the benefit of extended self-directed playtime, which is the cornerstone of our philosophy.

The Heart and Hands teachers work diligently to ensure that the environment itself provides guidance and boundaries that are clear and sensitive to children's needs. We focus on being resources for the children as needed rather than entertaining them or directing their play. While we may suggest an activity for someone who seems like they need guidance, the child still has the possibility of walking away from that activity and choosing her own way of playing.

This emphasis on free play rather than on the teacher or individual children may at first seem odd to the observer who is used to a more mainstream approach to early education. When the classroom is working well, there is a happy hum of children playing. The teachers are quiet and working on their own tasks—chopping carrots for lunch, sweeping, cleaning off a table, sewing a torn cape, gardening or maybe just sitting calmly on a bench or rocking chair knitting for an extended period of time. The teachers are ready to offer assistance if it is needed but are wise enough to know that struggle is part of learning and that children learn best at their own speed and in their own way. Too much interference by adults will disrupt the happy hum and derail deep play.

A close look at young children worldwide reveals the spontaneous whole-self involvement of their bodies, minds and spirits in the joyful pursuit of play. Something deep within prompts them to enjoy the tug of gravity and urges them to move, chase each other, wrestle and squeal with delight—and to find pleasure through exploration and tinkering with objects around them, making toys or building houses and hiding places.

Immersion in the natural world is a central aspect of healthy child's play. High-tech industries have found that their best overall problem solvers were master tinkerers in their youth. They have even altered their hiring policy to give high priority to this play background information from an applicant's childhood, according to Stuart Brown, M.D., the founder of the National Institute for Play.

At Heart and Hands we honor the child's innate capacities for play and imagination. They are not only crucial to a child's sense of well being but also the

path to envisioning possibilities and discovering new ideas. Perhaps it is part of the genius of childhood to weave play and imagination into one seamless activity—a way in which our minds, bodies and spirits are integrated and in dialog with each other. This integration is the source of the “happy hum” of our healthy classroom.

WHAT’S WALDORF?

Founded in 1919 in Germany by Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian scientist and philosopher, the Waldorf educational approach is now found worldwide in schools that offer grade levels from preschool through high school. Steiner believed in a unity of spirit, soul, and body, and Waldorf schools reflect that in their common theme of heart, head, and hands.

A Waldorf preschool strives to offer a warm, beautiful and loving home-like environment, which is protective and secure and where things happen in a predictable, regular manner. The structure that the schedule provides for the children reinforces the safe environment that stimulates their creativity and exploration. Social interactions and transitions are learning opportunities. Even the routine tasks of living and how the school implements them are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children’s learning, self-help, and social skills. Teachers also develop a sense of wonder in their students, with the goal of instilling a lifelong love of learning, by allowing preschool children to fully explore their imagination and fantasy world. Steiner said that Waldorf Education is not a pedagogical system, but the art of awakening what is actually there within the human being. An emphasis on practical skills, such as children once experienced in a home environment, allows the child’s cognitive skills to unfold naturally. Along with vigorous, healthy play, these are the kinds of things that provide the nerve activity needed for higher learning in the areas of language development, dexterity, math skills, social skills, and creative thinking. Steiner advised against a “merely” intellectual education, firmly believing in the importance of play for child development. Art is taught not to make children into artists, but to expose them to the healing influence of color, to exercise their creative wills, and to counteract the tendency of our time to set the imagination apart from learning. Music and drama are an integral part of the curriculum from the earliest years; thus the children learn that artistic expression is just as important a part of being human as knowing the Pythagorean Theorem or the major rivers of Europe.

At Heart and Hands, true to the Waldorf philosophy, we honor the child’s innate capacities for play and imagination. They are not only crucial to a child’s sense of

well being but also the path to envisioning possibilities and discovering new ideas. Perhaps it is part of the genius of childhood to weave play and imagination into one seamless activity—a way in which our minds, bodies and spirits are integrated and in dialog with each other.

HOW WE PLAY: ARTS & CRAFTS AND TOYS

We strive to make sure all of our art supplies are safe, non-toxic and as washable as possible (though some arts supplies wash out better than others). The toys that the children play with are generally made of natural materials (wood, glass, metal, ceramics, etc.) with a few exceptions.

The projects we offer the children are often long term, taking planning and ongoing work. Sometimes there is instant gratification through our arts projects but we strive to teach the children the value of long-term commitment for important projects in our lives. Decision making in art strengthens the decision making muscle, and helps in making other decisions.

Philosophically speaking, art is open ended, an expression of feelings and emotion. In art there is no right or wrong way. In contrast, with crafts there is an end product in mind...a way it “should” look. We feel that the process of creating is most important, not the result. We always work with the process allowing everything to be a unique opportunity to explore and discover in a calm, relaxed manner. We believe that art is truly a process and not a product!

Like our art projects, our toys generally consist of simple materials drawn from natural sources that can be transformed imaginatively to fit a wide variety of purposes. Blocks become a house, a police station, a castle or a fire engine. The sand box offers explorations to China or the ingredients for a mud feast. The natural materials serve both to remind children of the source of their toys and provide a biofeedback loop that cold hard plastic can't.

Toys from home are not a good idea as they can be hard to share. It also makes it hard for children to play if they have a toy they must keep in their hand to avoid sharing or if they must remain vigilant of their toy from home. Please discourage your child from bringing toys from home. If a child does bring a toy, we will ask them to keep it safe and sound in their cubbies until the end of the day.

Diapers & Toilet Training

Your child does NOT have to be potty-trained to attend Heart and Hands. In fact, many of our children develop this skill during their tenure at our school. If your child is still in diapers, we ask that you supply diapers for them and we stock them in the bathroom on the shelf. Diapers, like clothing, need to be free of media images as well. Diapering is an important process in the daily life of an infant or toddler. Diapering is a time for one-on-one interaction between the child and teacher. The process of changing diapers is always done in a comfortable and respectful manner. Heart and Hands will follow all guidelines for cleanliness and hygiene as outlined by Community Care Licensing.

Once your child is ready for toilet learning, we look forward to working with you to support this process. We have found that parents have many questions about toilet training: beginning the process, what to expect *during* the process and what methods to use. Through our experience and the advice and lessons of others, we have put together a comprehensive guide to successful toilet learning that is available upon request.

In brief, we believe that adults should watch until children show the signs that they are ready and then facilitate them by opening the doors and setting the stage for them to grow into their new skill. You're looking for the trend in a more general way towards independence, and understanding of what is going on. The following are some general guidelines of specific signs to look for:

- Physical signs
 - Is coordinated enough to walk, and even run, steadily.
 - Urinates a fair amount at one time.
 - Has some regularity of bowel movements (B.M.)
 - Has "dry" periods of at least two hours, which shows that his/her bladder muscles are developed enough to hold urine.
 - Resisting diapering: won't lie down, crying, hiding, running away
 - No B.M. at night
- Behavioral signs
 - Dislikes the feeling of wearing a wet or dirty diaper
 - Shows interest in others' bathroom habits (i.e.: wants to watch you or their sibling go to the bathroom or wear underwear)
 - Gives a physical or verbal sign when (s)he's having a bowel movement such as grunting, squatting, telling you, or hiding.
 - Demonstrates a desire for independence.
 - Takes pride in accomplishments.

- Cognitive signs
 - Can follow simple instructions, such as "go get the toy."
 - Understands the value of putting things where they belong.
 - Has words for urine and stool.
- Emotional signs
 - Desire to master own body.
 - Desire for parental approval.
 - Imitates others' bathroom skills.

In demonstrating these signs the child is communicating with you about the desire to be diaper free. When you think your child is ready, please come talk to us so that we can support you in the process. Here are some tips to send them to school with the best chance of success:

- Find clothing that is easy to take off (with elastic waistbands rather than buttons and snaps)...these will set the child up for success.
- Make sure there are several changes of pants and socks in your child's cubby. An extra pair of shoes is often helpful too.
- Many parents elect to forego underwear during toilet learning as it can feel mimic the feel of a diaper. Make sure that during the time of no underpants, your child wears soft clothing (sweat pants not jeans) to reduce the likelihood of chafing.
- Always suggest using the toilet before leaving Heart and Hands at the end of the day.

Ways in which we are able to best support you are the following:

- We regularly remind the children to use the toilet to help prevent accidents.
- If your child has an accident while at school, we will help them to change their clothing,
use the bathroom, and move on with their day. Soiled clothing will be placed in a bag
and placed in your child's cubby.

Naps

Naptime at Heart and Hands is a quiet affair. We play music to provide grey noise for the resting children, but typically it's still and peaceful. Most children nap after lunch (approx. 12:30pm), however the exact process can change depending on the teacher and the age/needs of the children. When a child needs to rest at non-nap time, we make a quiet place for them and give them the time they need. Following is an overview of our routine:

- Nap children are called in one at a time where they are asked to or helped to remove their shoes and jacket. Outer clothing is also brushed off at this time.
- Younger children (who could be sad at seeing other children get picked up) start going down first.
- The children use the rest room, are diapered (if needed), and go to sit down to soak their feet in lavender water. The children's feet are then rubbed with lavender oil and then they are then helped to find their sheep skin. There they lay down and are covered by the teacher. A short rub on the back followed by "sleep well" is all there is.
- The teacher then moves on to the next child until all the children who need naps are taken care of.
- While the children are sleeping the teacher cleans the kitchen, does paper work, or anything keeps her nearby.

For new children we sit next to them and remind them they need to lie down. As the days go by and the child gets better at napping the teacher moves away. If a child cries they are given comfort, and returned to their nap space. This may be repeated several times as needed. If this routine is not working for a child, we try to accommodate their needs as best we can.

Non-napping children sometimes are asked to rest quietly or are allowed to play quietly outside.

Heart and Hands provides a lambskin and blanket. We ask that parents provide a little pillow. Blankets and lambskins are washed as needed/monthly. For new parents, if your child will be napping, please let us know about your home nap routine so that we can help your child transition to our Hearts and Hands routine most effectively.

ESSENTIAL OILS

Doterra essential oils are used throughout the day at Heart and Hands. They are diffused in the classroom, they are rubbed on the bottoms of children's feet, they help with bumps and bruises, and they are used in our cleaning products. If you would like more information about Doterra, please ask the Director.

Clothing Recommendations

Getting children dressed in the mornings is one of the fun parts of parenthood, no? Here are some recommendations on dressing your child for success. Please know that your child will get dirty while attending Heart and Hands!

- **Dirty** - Remember we will get dirty, with sand, mud and paint, so please never send your child in clothing that can not stand the play or dirt.
- **Ease and Comfort** - Do not dress your child in clothing they cannot manage. It is important for your child to be comfortable. If your child is going through potty training, pants with an elastic waist that can be quickly pulled down are ideal.
- **Layer** - With the ever-changing weather in Sonoma County, we ask that your child be dressed in layers so that we can add or remove as needed. Mornings are often chilly but give way to warm afternoons.
- **No Media Images** - We strive for a media free environment (see below for more on this), consequently this means asking that the children's clothing not have media images. Examples include Sesame Street characters, Disney cartoon characters, pop culture icons, etc. We wish to keep the children unconscious of the way they look, while enhancing imaginative play that arises from within their beings.
- **Cubbies** - clothes will undoubtedly get wet or muddy at some point and we'll need to change your children into dry clothing. Please fill your child's cubbie with a complete change of clothing (short sleeved shirt, long sleeved shirt, pants, underwear, and socks)...and make sure to revisit the contents for seasonal and size appropriateness!
- **Label** - All clothing should be labeled – mark the tag so we know whom it belongs to if a layer is discarded or taken off to be washed.
- **Lost & Found** – Unidentified garments are laundered and placed in the drawers by the door. Please check there...when the drawers become full extra items are sent to a second hand store in Petaluma.

Media Policy

We strive for a media free environment. As noted above, this primarily means asking that the children's clothing not have media images. However, we also encourage parents to limit their children's exposure to media whenever possible. We work hard to create our environment, and media images can negatively impact a child's play. Our philosophy emphasizes using creative imagery to spark the imagination and encourage harmonious play.

For our purposes, electronic media includes television, DVDs, videos and video games, computers, etc. Such media is known to interfere with children's natural play instincts and inhibit the imagination. Media of this kind often introduces powerful, sophisticated and complex images and sounds that can be overwhelming,

inappropriate, and misleading. Parents have consistently found that reducing the influence of media on their family life has encouraged family members to develop a livelier interest in one another, as well as enriched and deepened their communication. The impact of media exposure is passed on to other children, reverberating through the preschool community and showing up in other children's play, attitudes, language and inner life.

We ask that your child not be exposed to television, but if you do allow your child to watch TV, we ask that you not allow them to watch it in the morning before they come to school or to limit it only to weekends. If you would like more information on this topic, please ask as we have many resources.

CELL PHONE USAGE

The time you spend at Heart and Hands dropping off and picking up your children are important times of communication between the school and home. In order to make the best use of these opportunities and to meet your child's needs during these transitions, we ask that you not use your cell phone at anytime at school.

Guidance Policy

The Heart and Hands discipline policy is intended to be proactive rather than reactive. We start work to diffuse problematic situations while maintaining an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and order. Planning ahead, having clear limits, and modeling appropriate behavior supports us in guiding the children.

When children are in conflict we begin by supporting them in talking to each other, sometimes offering them the words they need to use. We help them to identify their emotions, explain themselves and their needs. If the conflict is physical we keep both children together and process it together. Consistently the message we communicate to the children is that "even though you make mistakes, you can and must make amends."

We find that often when a child is out of sorts they are tired, hungry, or just not in a good place. Therefore no amount of discipline will actually help. They need to be fed, hugged, given a place to rest, or be near an adult. This allows the child to feel as if they are helping and being supported, not abandoned. There is no right answer as to how to discipline a child...but it must always make sense, not be excessive, and help to bring about a change.

Legal Statements and Tax Information

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

All children are admitted on a non-discriminatory basis: equal treatment and services with no regard for race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, or parents' sexual orientation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important to remember that any time you spend visiting here at Heart and Hands will show you only a small piece of a larger puzzle that makes up the school day, week, and year. Behavior you witness can be a once in a lifetime happening or a daily occurrence. Whatever you see or hear must stay here. Each child and family deserves to be treated with respect, and this includes keeping gossip out and confidentiality in. We are a community and we must strive to hold one another in the highest light.

MANDATED REPORTING

All staff and volunteers are mandated reporters of child abuse because each has direct contact with children and families and so falls into the category of "child care custodian." We are required by law to report all known or suspected child abuse or neglect.

TAXES – TAX ID #: 26-3449483

As tax programs and laws change almost yearly, we advise you to talk with your tax professional about what would be in your best interest. In January W-10s will be supplied to all current families.

We encourage you to find out if your company has a flexible spending account (FSA) in which money can be set aside from your pre-tax income to pay for child care services thereby lowering your taxable earnings. Income earners may be eligible for a childcare credit.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the Heart and Hands parent handbook. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the parent handbook and to ask the Director any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in the Heart and Hands Handbook.

Student(s) Name:

DOB:

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Director-Heart and Hands

Date