

PUMPKIN PATCH ACRES

Early Learning & Child Care — Waldorf-Inspired Outdoor Preschool & Homestead Program

FAMILY HANDBOOK (UPDATED FALL 2026)

Welcome to Pumpkin Patch Acres Early Learning & Child Care! Our program provides a traditional, outdoor, nature-based homestead environment where children learn, explore, and grow. Please review our complete program policies below. Kindly initial beside each section heading and complete the signature page at the end.

1 ENROLLMENT & WITHDRAWAL

INITIALS: _____

- **Enrollment Requirements:** A signed copy of this handbook and your child's complete enrollment form must be returned before care officially begins.
- **Notice of Withdrawal:** A two-week written notice is appreciated if you plan to withdraw your child from the program. No refunds will be issued for any prepaid tuition.
- **Termination of Care:** We reserve the right to terminate care at any time. When possible, a 2 week notice will be provided.

2 TUITION, BILLING & PAYMENT

INITIALS: _____

- **Weekly Billing Rhythm:** Tuition is billed on a regular weekly rhythm and is due every Friday by midnight for the upcoming week of care.
- **Late Payments & Fees:** If tuition is not received on time, care will not be provided until payment is made in full. A \$35 daily late fee applies to all late payments. A \$20 returned check fee applies to any returned payments. We accept Zelle, cash, and personal checks.
- **Attendance:** Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance, and is due regardless of absences, sick days, family vacations, or missed days unless falling on an official unpaid closure.

3 HOLIDAY CALENDAR & PROVIDER TIME OFF

INITIALS: _____

- **Paid Holidays:** Standard weekly tuition applies during weeks containing our scheduled paid holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving Day) when they fall on a scheduled operating day (Monday – Thursday).
- **Seasonal Closures:** The preschool is closed (unpaid) for two full seasonal break weeks each year: the week of July 4th and the week of Christmas. Dates for any additional scheduled closures will be announced at least six weeks in advance.
- **Sick & Personal Days:** Up to five unpaid provider sick/personal days are reserved each calendar year, with advance notice provided whenever possible.
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4 DROP-OFF, PICK-UP & DAILY READINESS

INITIALS: _____

- **Morning Readiness:** Children should arrive bathed, clean, and fully dressed for the day. Please complete all morning grooming and diaper changes at home prior to arrival so your child can transition smoothly into our morning rhythm.
- **Drop-Off Schedule:** We request that drop-offs occur no later than 9:00 AM to protect our daily schedule. Children must enter care in a calm, cooperative state. Disruptive or escalated behavior at drop-off will require the parent to take the child back to the car to regulate or return home for the day.
- **Nap Time Window:** Drop-offs and pick-ups during rest time (1:00 PM – 3:00 PM) are prohibited unless strictly necessary.
- **Authorized Pick-Up:** Only adults listed on your child's enrollment form may pick up unless advance written permission is provided.
- **Late Pick-Up Fees:** A late fee of \$1 per minute per violation applies to pick-ups past your scheduled time or closing. Late fees must be paid before the child may return to care.

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5 DIAPERING, POTTY TRAINING & BATHROOM RHYTHM

INITIALS:

- **Diapering Supplies:** Parents must supply diapers, pull-ups, and creams. Wipes are provided on-site.
- **Age & Training Expectations:** We welcome children starting at age 2. Potty training must be led at home by parents, with full bathroom independence expected around age 3 or shortly after.
- **Readiness Requirements:** Children must be developmentally ready and able to communicate toileting needs. Pull-ups must be worn until the child has been completely accident-free at home for a minimum of two consecutive weeks. Elimination communication is not supported.
- **Pausing Training:** Potty training at daycare may be paused at the provider's discretion if repeated accidents, resistance, or distress occur.

6 OUTDOOR GEAR & CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS

INITIALS:

- **Dressing for Elements:** We spend extensive time exploring outdoors in all weather conditions. Children must arrive dressed for active, messy outdoor play. Outfits that cannot get dirty or stained must not be worn.
- **Gear & Labeling:** Seasonal gear requirement lists will be provided in advance. All personal clothing, boots, and outdoor gear brought from home must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name.
- **Spare Clothes:** Families must maintain a full, weather-appropriate change of clothes (including underwear and socks) on-site at all times. Replacement items must be sent the following day if used. If a child lacks proper clothes or weather gear, parents will be required to bring items immediately or pick up their child.

7 MEALS, FOOD ALLERGIES & BELONGINGS

INITIALS:

- **Meals & Dining:** Children may bring a home-packed lunch or participate in our family-style meals prepared on-site (breakfast served 7:30–8:30 AM; lunch 11:30 AM–12:30 PM). Children arriving after 8:30 AM must have eaten breakfast at home. Outside snacks or individual treats are not permitted as part of our shared food culture.
- **Severe Allergies Notice:** Pumpkin Patch Acres is a working homestead where diverse foods are prepared, and farm animals are kept. Due to communal family-style dining and environmental allergens, we are unable to accommodate severe or life-threatening food or animal allergies.

8 NAP & REST TIME RHYTHM

INITIALS:

- **Rest Schedule:** Daily quiet rest time occurs after lunch between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. All children are expected to participate.
- **Rest Expectations:** Children are not forced to sleep but must rest quietly on individual mats with provided quiet activities. Infants follow their individual safe-sleep schedule in approved cribs.
- **No Early Waking:** We do not keep children awake or wake them early upon parent request, as rest supports the health and balance of the entire group.

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9 ILLNESS & MEDICATION POLICY

INITIALS:

- **Symptom Exclusion:** Children must remain home if showing symptoms of severe illness, including fever, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent coughing, unknown rashes, or extreme lethargy.
- **Pick-Up Requirement:** If a child becomes ill during care, parents will be contacted immediately and must arrange prompt pick-up.
- **Return Criteria:** Return to care is strictly at the provider's discretion to protect group safety, regardless of outside doctor notes.

10 GUIDANCE, BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

INITIALS:

- **Loving Structure:** We utilize redirection, firm boundaries, clear expectations, and positive affirmation.
- **Care of Property:** Children are taught to respect toys and tools. While normal wear and tear is expected, intentional destruction of property is unacceptable, and parents may be billed for replacement items.
- **Group Suitability:** We provide loving guidance but are not equipped for intensive one-on-one behavioral therapy or specialized intervention. Children must be capable of age-appropriate cooperation in a small group setting. Uncooperative or dangerous behavior will require immediate pick-up.

11 PERSONAL ITEMS & TOY RULES

INITIALS:

- **Home Toys:** Toys from home must remain at home, with the exception of one soft nap comfort item or designated show-and-tell items. We are not responsible for lost or damaged personal items.
- **Choking Hazard Ban:** No small items from home are permitted under any circumstances (e.g., small figurines, trinkets, coins, keychains, jewelry, or pocket items) due to severe choking risks to younger children.

12 TECHNOLOGY, MEDIA & PRIVACY POLICIES

INITIALS:

- **Program Screen Time:** Personal devices (tablets, phones, smartwatches, potty watches, electronic toys) are strictly prohibited. Program screen use is limited to select educational videos or learning games (phonics, sign language, movement).
- **Media & Privacy:** Non-identifiable photos (hands, artwork, back of heads) may occasionally be taken for program documentation. Parents must refrain from posting photos or videos online that display our childcare environment, identifying features, or other enrolled children.

13 SAFETY, SECURITY & MANDATORY REPORTING

INITIALS:

- **Open Door & Locks:** We maintain an open-door policy for parents (avoiding rest time when possible). Exterior doors remain locked for safety.
- **Security Cameras:** Interior and exterior security cameras are operational for safety. Live feeds and recorded footage are non-accessible to parents to protect group privacy.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** Caregivers are CPR/First Aid certified and background-checked. Under Idaho law, childcare providers are mandatory reporters required to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

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14 HOMESTEAD LIFE & FAITH STATEMENT

INITIALS: _____

- **Homestead Learning:** Children participate in healthy traditional practical life skills, including baking, cooking, gardening, light chores, and animal care (chickens, ducks, goats, dogs).
- **Faith & Values:** We are a non-denominational Christian home daycare reflecting values of kindness, honesty, hard work, and gratitude, celebrating traditional Christian holidays. Outside religious recruitment or missionary efforts are not permitted.

15 WEATHER & EMERGENCY CLOSURES

INITIALS: _____

- **Weather Closure Decisions:** We follow our own judgment regarding severe weather closures or emergency delays, which may differ from local public school district decisions. Parents will be notified promptly during emergency events.

16 TERMINATION & REFUND SUMMARY

INITIALS: _____

- **Immediate Termination:** Care may be terminated immediately without notice for severe behavioral issues, physical aggression, intentional harm, disrespect/abuse from parents/guardians toward staff, or repeated policy violations.
- **Refund Terms:** No refunds of any paid tuition or weekly fees will be granted if care is terminated due to policy or behavioral violations. If care is ended by the provider for reasons unrelated to violations, unused prepaid days will be refunded.

"Nurturing Hearts & Minds in Nature"

PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT & SIGNATURE PAGE

Thank you for partnering with us to keep our program safe, organized, and joyful! By signing below, you confirm that you have read, understood, and agreed to follow all policies outlined in the updated Pumpkin Patch Acres Family Handbook.

Enrolled Child(ren) Full Name(s)

Parent/Guardian 1 Printed Name

Parent/Guardian 1 Signature & Date

Parent/Guardian 2 Printed Name

Parent/Guardian 2 Signature & Date