

A Day in the Life

of a Clark Fork School

Preschooler (2-5 year olds)

As a Clark Fork Preschooler your day is full of adventure, discovery, interaction, and exploration. Your classroom consists of interesting play stations including a sensory table, dramatic play area, books, building blocks, play dough, and much more.

When you arrive at 9:00 in the morning, your teachers, who are always excited to see you, greet you. You put your lunch in your very own “cubbie,” hang up your coat, and get on with the grand adventures of the day. For the next hour and thirty minutes you call the shots. You can dream up a dramatic play, build a world with blocks, experiment with art and science, discover the wonders of nature, or travel to new places through the many books available. Your teachers are there to inspire, encourage, support, and challenge you, helping to make your experience rich and remarkable. If you get hungry you can bring your snacks to the snack spot anytime during your adventure. You tidy up after yourself as you move along in your explorations. Oftentimes, we will take a trip outside so you can run, jump, and play on our school playground. At the end of our morning Explore Time, you’ll hear the musical invitation for everyone to join together in a big clean-up effort. This time of day children who are toilet independent are given reminders to use the bathroom, while children in diapers are checked and changed.

After about ten minutes of productive clean-up, you’ll join your classmates and teacher for group time, where you’ll sing songs together. Then you will either participate in a large-group game, story-acting activity, or movement or you’ll break into smaller groups and get into some really interesting projects and get to know your classmates.

Now it’s time for lunch. After washing your hands and grabbing your lunch box from your cubby, you’ll join your classmates at the table. When you’re finished you’ll put your lunch box away and make a classroom choice (typically books, sensory table, and play dough).

Before heading outside, we gather for a closing Thankful Circle. Thankful circle usually consists of a story, song and a chance to share something special about your school day.

Now you’ll head outside for some fresh air, fun and movement! Whatever the season, you’ll enjoy the play yard, sandbox, and woodworking bench, or you might find yourself in a game or on the swings moving your muscles in the great outdoors. At 1:00 you’ll leave school for the day, unless you’re enrolled in afternoon preschool as well.

If you stay for afternoon preschool, you’ll come in from the playground and participate in Quiet Time. Quiet Time is a time of day that you’ll sleep, rest, or engage in quiet activities (books, puzzles, snack, etc). Teachers are there to read stories and rub backs.

Our school day is over at 3:00 when your parent picks you up.

Exposure

In the preschool environment there are a wide variety of interests for children to explore. Teachers create a number of science experiments, artistic opportunities, and nature discoveries. Dramatic play can be any place – it has been a bear’s lair, a restaurant, an undersea world, a veterinarian’s office, a smoothie shop, and so much more.

Outings and Field Trips

Several times throughout the school year the preschool class heads out of the school for various adventures. Sometimes parents carpool to take the children to their destination and other times children will walk or take the city bus with the help of parents and teachers. Destinations include saunters in nature, trips to a farm, the theater, and more.

Place-Based Education

Clark Fork School is a place-based school. Place-based education is the practice of using the local community and natural environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. In addition to academic achievement, place-based education strives to optimize a student’s learning experience and engagement by creating hands-on experiences that are largely student-centered and self-directed. Place-based education also strives to create citizens that have a sense of self-efficacy; to develop community members who are invested in the betterment and preservation of their community and believe their actions can and do make a difference.

Play-Based Learning

The Clark Fork School Preschool program is a play-based learning environment. We believe strongly that when young children play together, they learn invaluable social lessons, developing the foundations for successful school careers. Play also fosters their academic development as they are encouraged to explore, take risks, and teach one another. You can expect your child to have daily opportunities to play inside and outside in safe and stimulating environments.

Interaction

Throughout the day preschoolers have ample opportunity to interact with each other and with teachers, as well as with parents who may be spending time in the classroom. They find that they like certain activities with classmates, and they learn how to communicate, imagine, create, and share with each other as the year goes on. Sometimes they’ll agree, sometime they won’t, but they will always have the opportunity to work out their ideas, issues, and intentions with one another. Teachers are there to help guide them to expand their possibilities, strengthen their relationships, and encourage their respect for one another.

Child Guidance

Clark Fork School’s discipline really looks much more like guidance than anything else. Teachers encourage children to consider their choices, actions, and effects on others, and help them in making safe, respectful, kind choices. Although the structure of the preschool day is very open and flexible, there are certain times throughout the day when the whole class joins together for certain reasons and activities. In order to benefit from these special times, children are encouraged to be involved in them.

We sincerely hope you have a wonderful school day!

To inquire about

Clark Fork School’s Preschool Program,

Please call 728-3395, or send email to

office@clarkforkschool.org, or visit our website at www.clarforkschool.org.

Clark Fork School has three preschool classrooms that serve the following age groups:

Steller’s Jay – 2-3 years old

Chickadee – 3-5 years old

Meadowlark – 3-5 years old