SNC Nature Preschool

Location:

Stokes Nature Center
2696 East Highway 89
Logan Canyon, UT

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 4204
Logan, UT 84323-4204

Nature Center Telephone: 435-755-3239
Website: www.logannature.org

Staff:

Preschool Director/Lead Teacher: Sadie Enright

Lead Teacher: Kathy Campanella

Teachers: Grace Chovil, Talor Hall

SNC Director of Education: Patrick Kelly

SNC Executive Director: Kendra Penry-Clutter

The SNC Nature Preschool classroom, with no more than eight children, has one lead teacher and one additional teacher present at all times. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR. Children are under the direct supervision of a staff person at all times, whether in or outside the classroom.

Mission:

Stokes Nature Center’s mission is to provide opportunities for students of all ages to explore, learn about, and develop appreciation and stewardship for our natural world. SNC Nature Preschool shares this mission and aims to provide 3-5 year-old children with the skills necessary to enter the next phase of their lives with confidence.

Philosophy:

At SNC Nature Preschool we believe that children are intrinsically motivated to learn. The teaching staff promotes learning by:

- Providing an environment which encourages discovery, experimentation, and the opportunity to see the results of one’s actions.
- Developing activities that encourage growth based on each child’s abilities and interests.
- Encouraging problem solving and reflection by asking open-ended questions and providing information in response to each child’s ideas, insights, and concerns.
- Assisting children in their interactions with each other and offering opportunities for cooperative learning.
- Appreciating the individuality of children and families and celebrating diversity.
Curriculum:

According to the Utah Early Childhood Core Standards:
“The main focus in early childhood is for children to begin to value learning, gain knowledge, and understand their world.” (www.ueg.org/core/) In order to address the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of our students, SNC Nature Preschool will focus on the guidelines below, using nature as our setting and play as our learning process.

Intended Learning Outcomes: Beginning in early childhood, children should:

1. **Demonstrate a positive learning attitude.**
   - Display a sense of curiosity.
   - Practice personal responsibility for learning.
   - Demonstrate persistence in completing tasks.
   - Apply prior knowledge and processes to construct new knowledge.
   - Voluntarily use a variety of resources to investigate topics of interest.

2. **Develop social skills and ethical responsibility.**
   - Respect similarities and differences in others.
   - Treat others with kindness and fairness.
   - Follow rules.
   - Include others in learning and play activities.
   - Function positively as a member of a family, learning group, school, and community.
   - Initiate and respond to social interactions with peers and adults.

3. **Demonstrate responsible emotional behaviors.**
   - Recognize own values, talents, and skills.
   - Express self in positive ways.
   - Demonstrate behavior appropriate to the situation.
   - Express feelings appropriately.
   - Meet and respect needs of self and others.

4. **Develop physical skills and personal hygiene.**
   - Learn proper care of the body for health and fitness.
   - Develop knowledge that enhances participation in physical activities and healthy food choices.
   - Display persistence in learning motor skills and developing fitness.
   - Use physical activity for self-expression.

5. **Understand and use basic concepts and skills.**
   - Develop phonological and phonemic awareness.
   - Develop expressive and receptive vocabulary.
   - Develop reasoning and sequencing skills.
   - Demonstrate problem-solving skills.
   - Observe, sort, and classify objects.
   - Make connections from content areas to application in real life.

These outcomes are interwoven in Standards, which offer specific and measurable indicators and can be found at www.ueg.org/core/
Sample Schedule
We will maintain a loose schedule, with predictable events throughout the day such as outdoor play, snack, yoga, story time and group experiences, to give children the security of structure. As the weather and air quality allow, we will spend as much time as possible outdoors. There may be days when this is simply not possible and we will do our best to bring nature indoors. The following is an example of our intended daily schedule:

Arrival
Parents bring children to the gate at the River Trail head between 8:55 – 9:05am/12:25-12:35 p.m. Please be sure that the child has used the toilet right before leaving for school. At this point, parents are free to leave or walk to the nature center with their child. At 9:05/12:35 we will begin our walk to nature center building. Parents and siblings are asked to spend no more than 15 minutes with the preschool class before departing, unless other arrangements have been made with the teachers.

Active Outdoor Play (often in small groups)
Children will play in the outdoor play area. They will play inside if the weather conditions or air quality are unfavorable. Temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit are often too uncomfortable for youngsters, in which case we will go indoors at the beginning of class and perhaps spend more time outdoors during the last hour of class. Play area activities include the mud kitchen, climbing, water play, fort building, digging, raking, fine motor activities, and dramatic and imaginative play. Children are encouraged to choose whether they would like to play with others or on their own, and to respect their peers.

Group Meeting
Children take part in conversation, create journal entries, engage in yoga and movement activities, listen to stories, sing songs, and participate in other whole-group activities.

Snack Time
Teachers and children eat “family style,” serve food, converse, and enjoy each other’s company. Teachers often read a story to the class during snack. Children clean up from snack as they finish eating and may look at books as they wait for others or go directly to free choice time, either indoors or outdoors.

Choice Time (indoors or outdoors)
Children have a block of uninterrupted time to choose an activity among the different areas of the classroom. This allows children to lengthen attention spans and to develop competency with an activity. Classroom choices include Montessori-style materials, art supplies, books, natural materials for exploration and a variety of materials related to the topic of the week. All materials are well kept and children are taught to respect each item and put everything away after use. Some examples include:

- Blocks and building (e.g., the use of wood blocks or hollow blocks)
- Art activities (e.g., painting, drawing, cutting, gluing)
- Sensory activities (e.g., water play, clay, sand trays)
- Practical Life Activities (sorting, pouring, spooning, tweezing)
- Science and discovery activities (e.g., observing an animal or experimenting with salt & ice)
- Writing activities (e.g., tracing letters in sand trays, creating a book or drawing a picture story)
- Reading activities (e.g., listening to a story or reading to a teacher or peer)
- Dramatic play activities (e.g., building animal homes or pretending to be a veterinarian)
- Math and manipulative activities (e.g., puzzles, using counting objects, playing a matching game)
- Music and movement activities (e.g., playing instruments, singing, dancing, poetry)
- Games and focused activities (e.g., sorting rocks, matching colors)
Small Group and Literacy
Adult-directed activities such as science experiments or looking at maps occur in small groups. These activities allow children the opportunity to ask more questions, and allows the teacher to evaluate each child’s needs and interests. This is an opportunity for more concentrated learning, especially for those preparing for Kindergarten. A basic early literacy program will be presented one day a week. This program will focus on letter and sound recognition, word recognition, syllables and the joy of reading.

End of the Day
We clean up our materials before dressing in outdoor gear and walking back to the trailhead. Students are encouraged to dress themselves and will be guided through that process with the goal of being self-sufficient as soon as possible.

Departure/Pick Up
Parents will pick children up at the gate between 11:55-12:05/3:25-3:35. Parents are encouraged to arrive early and meet us on the trail if they like. Parents are also welcome to walk to the nature center building for pick up if they like. Please do not arrive later than 12:05/3:35! We do not have a policy for late pick up but please keep in mind that teachers have schedules to maintain as well.

Schedule of Operation
For the 2019-2020 school year, Stokes Nature Preschool is offering a 2-day per week and a 4-day per week program. Parents may choose to enroll their child in the 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. or 12:30-3:30 p.m. session on Mon/Wed, Tues/Thurs or Monday – Thursday. All sessions will focus on connecting with nature and learning through play, social interactions and child-directed activities. Ages are mixed in all sessions, from 3-5 years old.
The 2019-2020 school year will run September 3, 2019 through May 21, 2020 and will closely follow the Logan City School District Calendar. Family field days are scheduled on one Friday a month. These are optional family outings and locations will vary throughout the year.

Clothing—Dressing for Success
Discovery-based learning can be messy. For this reason, it is important that children come dressed for messy, outdoor play. Clothing that can be covered in mud, paint, sand and other materials of discovery-based learning is necessary every day! Freedom from restrictive clothing is also necessary. Tight clothing, fancy dresses, and costumes get in the way during active play. Children also need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping, and climbing. Exposed toes are discouraged, as are shoes that slip off easily.
Layers of clothing for changing weather and moving from outdoors to indoors are needed for children to enjoy the variety of activities offered throughout the day. You should expect your child to be outside every day.
Clothing needs for each season include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Fall</strong></th>
<th><strong>Winter</strong></th>
<th><strong>Spring</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rubber boots</td>
<td>warm long underwear</td>
<td>Rubber boots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacket or sweatshirt</td>
<td>fleece pants</td>
<td>Jacket or sweatshirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain jacket w/hood</td>
<td>fleece shirt/jacket</td>
<td>Rain jacket w/hood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain pants</td>
<td>Wool/fleece socks</td>
<td>Rain pants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm socks</td>
<td>Snow pants/bibs</td>
<td>Sun hat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun hat</td>
<td>Winter coat</td>
<td>*Umbrellas are not permitted at preschool</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Umbrellas are not permitted at preschool</td>
<td>Waterproof gloves or mittens</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scarf/neck cover</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hat/balaclava</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snow Boots</td>
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If you would like assistance in acquiring the recommended clothing, please let us know. It is a good idea to ask other parents if they might have extra or outgrown gear before buying it new!

**Parent Involvement**

Entering preschool is a milestone for youngsters. To ease the transition from home to school, it is a great help to talk regularly with your preschooler about his or her new experiences. It is an opportunity to share the excitement of meeting new people and sharing new ideas. Your preschooler will benefit from your support and understanding as he/she begins to grow outside the home. Recognizing the important connection of home and school, we ask that your involvement include:

- Attending Orientation, held in August, where you will have a chance to meet the staff and learn what to expect for the coming year.
- Reading email updates, sent on Friday of each week.
- Chaperoning on the trail whenever possible, if this is a suitable option for you and your child.
- Attending field days whenever possible. Field days allow parents to explore and share some fun activities with the children as well as connect with the other parents in the group.

Parents are always welcome to schedule a special visit to the Preschool, especially if you have something specific that you and your child would like to share with the class, (ie: art project, cultural materials, specimens, etc.). Teachers will schedule two optional parent teacher conferences in Fall and Spring but we encourage you to talk with the classroom teachers whenever you have concerns or questions and a conference can be scheduled at any time should you or a teacher request.

**Registration Requirements**

*Documentation*

The child's parent or guardian must provide the following documentation to Stokes Nature Center Nature Preschool:

- Health History
- Photo & Liability Waiver
- Tuition Contract
- Registration Fee

**Enrollment Policy and Payment Options**

Stokes Nature Preschool accepts children who are age three before September 1 and not older than 4 on September 1 of the year of enrollment. Children who are attending kindergarten are considered too old to attend our preschool program.

To enroll your child in Nature Preschool you will need to submit a completed online registration form and the enrollment fee, which is $60 and includes a one-year family membership to Stokes Nature Center. Tuition for the 2019-20 school year is $1,575 or $175 per month for two days/week and $3,150 or $350 per month for four days/week. Tuition is payable via automatic checking withdrawal, check or credit card to Stokes Nature Center. Monthly payments are withdrawn/due by the 10th of each month. Past due payments will incur a 3% late fee for each day past the 10th of the month until payment is received. Returned checks or insufficient funds will incur a $25 fee and will be considered late until payment is made. Parents may also opt to pay for half or the entire school year in one payment. No tuition refunds or adjustments will be made due to missed days.

**Withdrawal Policy**

If a concern with your child's enrollment arises, please be sure to communicate with the preschool staff. When staff members are informed of the situation, most issues can be overcome as staff and families work
together. If, for any reason, it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from the class, tuition for the next 30 days after your official withdrawal date is required. You will be asked to fill out an online withdrawal form and you will be charged $22/day for each school day that your child would have attended during that 30 day period, whether he/she is in attendance or not. A child from the waiting list will immediately be offered the chance to fill the vacancy. Registration fees are non-refundable.

**Snow Days & Other School Closings**

SNC Nature Preschool is closed whenever Logan City School District is cancelled, including snow days. If SNC Nature Preschool is ever cancelled for unexpected circumstances, staff will text/call each parent no later than 8:15am on that day. Refunds are not given for cancellations, but make up days may be scheduled.

**Red Air Days**

SNC Nature Preschool will not be cancelled due to air quality. All routines will be followed as usual unless the air quality is in the Red Zone. We will still meet at the trailhead and walk to the nature center on Red air days but will remain in the building until 11:45/3:15, when we will walk back down. All parents are given the option to drive their child to and from the nature center on Red air days, but must wait until 9:15/12:45 to do so and must arrive for pick up at 11:40/3:10 in order to drive back down before the rest of the class leaves.

**Attendance & Health**

Regular attendance is important for your child to get the most from preschool. When there are frequent absences, a child may feel uncomfortable, as he/she may not know the schedule, activities, or names & faces of the teachers and other children. Friendships are easier when children attend regularly. That being said, there are times when it is best for a child NOT to be at school. If your child has one or more of the following symptoms, please do not send him/her to school:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
- A low-grade fever and acting ill.
- An infectious disease.
- Vomiting or upset stomach.
- Diarrhea—more than two loose/watery stools.
- Constant runny nose.
- Coughing non-stop.
- Pain.

You will be notified if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease. A parent or emergency contact will be contacted and asked to pick up your child if any of the above symptoms occur while he or she is at school. It is requested that you inform preschool staff if your child has been exposed to or contracts any communicable disease. Please take into consideration the rest of the children and staff. If possible, please call or text Sadie or Kathy if your child will not be attending. There are no make-up days or tuition refunds for absences.

**General Rules of Behavior**

- Respect staff, visitors and other children.
- Keep hands and feet to oneself.
- Obscene and inappropriate language or gestures are not acceptable.
- Children will only leave the room or group with an adult.
- Respect and take care of preschool space and materials and other people's belongings.
- We ask that children bring only what will fit in their backpacks, as toys will only be allowed during free-play times.
- No toy guns, swords or knives are allowed. We encourage children to play kindly and will not discourage them from using natural objects such as sticks as knives or other useful tools in an imaginary camping or hunting game, but we will ask that they do not pretend to shoot or otherwise injure another human.
**Discipline**
Positive discipline allows children to solve their own problems with the guidance and modeling of preschool staff. Children learn to use words instead of hitting and pushing. We will use redirection, removal from the group, or if the child is violent we may find it necessary to call a parent for pick up. The staff strives to work closely with parents to make the preschool experience the best that it can be for each child and family. In extreme situations where behavior is detrimental to the learning atmosphere on a continuing basis, a child may be asked to stay home for a day or two while the teachers work with the parents on a plan to help the child function more appropriately at school.

Our “Safe Place” is a spot where children and teachers can go whenever they need time to regain composure and/or spend a few minutes alone. We practice breathing and calming techniques and try to remind each other of these whenever we sense the need. Emotions are normal and we encourage children to take responsibility for their words and actions, to recognize their emotions and learn to guide themselves through difficult moments.

**Snacks**
Each family will be asked to bring a healthy snack for the whole class on a scheduled week. A snack calendar will be sent to each family and reminders will be emailed each week. Any food allergies or other dietary restrictions will be taken into consideration and will be made known to the entire parent group unless discretion is requested. If your child has a food allergy, it would be best if you provide an acceptable shelf-stable snack option for them to keep at preschool and eat whenever needed.

**Music & Movement**
Twice a month, each class will have a 50-minute music and movement program taught by Ewa Wilczynski. Ewa’s teaching philosophy is based on the Orff Schulwerk approach to teaching music. In this approach, students make music with activities that are enjoyable and natural for them such as songs, movements, improvisation and music games. Students learn musical concepts and improve their concentration as well as coordination and sensitivity to rhythm and tone through singing, dancing, and playing percussion instruments. Ewa brings her program to the nature center and works with the preschool staff to connect her music program to the nature themes being presented that week. At the end-of-year celebration, students will present a musical performance for parents.

**Field Trips**
One Friday/month, usually the second Friday, we will visit an off-site location. Invites with field trip information will be sent out prior to these outings. Children must be chaperoned and siblings are welcome. Field Days are optional and lots of fun!

**Animals at Preschool**
Animals play a large part in our curriculum and we will have visiting animals as well as permanent “critters” at the nature center. Please notify your child’s teacher of any animal or other allergies your child may have, or other concerns you have regarding animals. We do encounter dogs with their owners as we walk to and from preschool. If your child has a fear of dogs, please let us know so that we can be sure to help them feel safe, (pick them up or stand between them and the dog). Please do not bring pets to preschool.