Thorne Nature Preschool
Parent Handbook
2021-2022

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Founded in 1954, the mission of Thorne Nature Experience is to build Earth stewardship by providing youth with joyful, hands-on, place-based environmental education experiences that foster an emotional connection to nature.
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Welcome
Welcome to the Thorne Nature Preschool. We are honored that you chose Thorne to support the development of your growing child through our program. This is your copy of the Parent Handbook. This handbook contains important information that is essential to our ability to serve you and your child effectively. Please read it thoroughly and keep it in a convenient location. Refer to it when you have questions about our school policies. Please let the Preschool Director know if you have any questions or concerns.

To help us provide the best experience for your child, we encourage you to discuss your goals for your child’s time with us on a regular basis. The more we know about your child’s preschool and home experiences, the better we are able to serve you both. We invite you to work together with us to help your child experience the best our program has to offer!

Thank You,
Thorne Nature Preschool Staff

Statement of Purpose
To support the holistic development of young children and their relationship to the natural world, through joyful, hands-on, place-based, developmentally appropriate experiences that nurture the whole child and foster an emotional connection to nature.

Thorne Nature Preschool Educational Philosophy
Thorne Nature Preschool provides an early childhood educational experience that initiates young children into a deep relationship with the natural world and plants the seed for life-long environmental stewardship. Through daily immersion in nature with caring mentors and a focus on supporting early childhood development, Thorne Nature Preschool fosters the growth of the whole child (cognitive, physical, social, emotional, creative), while cultivating a profound connection to nature. Utilizing integrated academic and social curriculum grounded in nature, Thorne Nature Preschool nurtures the well-being of each child while preparing them to succeed in school and in life. Thorne believes that every child is a unique and competent individual, who is eager to explore and learn, and comes equipped with a natural and wonder-filled curiosity about life. By tapping into children’s love of learning, the Preschool strives to develop prepared, capable, confident, empathetic individuals who are masters of their own learning, and are inspired to make a difference in the world.

Core Beliefs
- Nature promotes the health and well-being of the whole-child.
- Nature is the ideal venue for academic growth, imaginative play, social and emotional learning, problem solving, and promoting active play.
• Frequent, immersive experiences in nature with a mentor cultivates an environmental ethic.
• Place-based environmental education connects children to their local community and is the starting point, for responsible citizenship.
• Today's youth are tomorrow's environmental stewards and leaders.

Enrollment
Before admission into Thorne Nature Preschool, parents/guardians must meet, read relevant materials, view the virtual tour, and have an interview with staff to determine whether the program will meet the needs of the child and the parents/guardians. Applications to Thorne Nature Preschool will be accepted regardless of race, color, sex, religion, handicap, political persuasion, national origin or ancestry.

Enrollment Process:
1. Fill out the Interest Form to start the enrollment process.

2. View the Thorne Nature Preschool Virtual Open House
Upon receipt of your interest form, you will be sent more information about our school, including a link to view the Thorne Nature Preschool Virtual Open House and other relevant information about the school.

3. One-on-one video or phone call with Thorne's Preschool Manager
After viewing the virtual open house and reading school materials, please reply to the email to set up a one-on-one via zoom or phone call with Thorne Nature Preschool's Manager. This will start the journey of getting to know each other and give you an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

4. Submit Enrollment forms and deposit
Once you receive an enrollment offer and if you feel that Thorne Nature Preschool is a good fit for your family, you can enroll your child in Thorne Nature Preschool, by completing your enrollment packet, including submitting a student contract, and paying your deposit and enrollment fee. Providing your enrollment forms with the enrollment deposit will reserve a space for your child.

Required Forms for Enrollment:
• Signed form signifying that parents/guardians have read Thorne's policies and procedures
• One month’s tuition as a deposit and enrollment fee of $100
• Student Contract
• Medical Forms and Immunization Record*
• Health Form
• Parent/Guardian Release and Sunscreen & Insect Repellent Permission Form
• Health Care Plan/Medication Forms (if applicable)
**Immunization**
Thorne is committed to following the State of Colorado's laws pertaining to schools, health forms, and immunization records. Colorado's Immunization Certificate must be completed for every student each year. Thorne will accept non-immunized or under-immunized children with a signed immunization exemption form.

The records of children enrolled in Thorne Nature Preschool are confidential and available to the child's parents upon request. **If a child attends more than one year, updated forms must be turned in before the start of each school year.**

**Tuition and Fees**

**Deposit**
There is a deposit of one month’s tuition that is credited towards tuition due at the time of registration for new families

**2021-2022 Tuition:**

**BOULDER/LAFAYETTE PRESCHOOL**

- 5 Days/Week (M-F, 9am-1pm) - $11,439.00 ($1,271 monthly)
- 3 Days/Week (M/W/F, 9am-1pm) - $6,847 ($761 monthly)
- 2 Days/Week (Tu/Th, 9am-1pm) - $5,032 ($559 monthly)

**EXTENDED CARE OPTIONS**

**Early Care**
Families can select days of the week that are needed. We just ask that the schedule stays consistent from week to week.
- M-F, 8:30am-9am- $14.50 per hour

**Lafayette Extended Care**
Families can select days of the week and schedule that are needed. We just ask that the schedule stays consistent from week to week.
- M-F, 1:00pm-3:30pm OR 1:00pm-4:30pm- $14.50 per hour

Boulder Transportation from Boulder Location to Extended Care at [Mt. View Preschool](#)
Families can select days of the week that are needed. We just ask that the schedule stays consistent from week to week.

- M-F, Transportation to Mt View- $7.50 per day

Parents are responsible for payment of all scheduled days, whether or not the days are used. Credits will not be issued for vacations or closings due to holidays or inclement weather.

General Nature Preschool Information and Procedures

Ages of Thorne Participants
Children ages 3 through 6 can attend Thorne’s Nature Preschool. Group size is maintained at a maximum ratio of 5 children per 1 adult, unless otherwise noted. Children must be three years old by the first day of enrollment and children must be fully toilet trained in order to attend the Preschool.

Locations

BOULDER
Thorne Nature Preschool Boulder will begin each day at the outdoor play area at East Boulder Community Center before heading to our outdoor learning area along Bobolink Trail! The outdoor learning area is nestled along South Boulder Creek, which offers a diverse habitat for children to play and learn, and is just a 10-minute walk from the Center.

East Boulder Community Center: 5660 Sioux Dr, Boulder, CO 80303

LAFFAYETTE
Thorne Nature Preschool Lafayette will begin each day at the outdoor play area at the Arts HUB building before heading to our outdoor learning area along the Coal Creek Trail! The outdoor learning area is nestled along Coal Creek, which offers a diverse habitat for children to play and learn, and is just a 20-minute walk along a trail from the building.

The Arts HUB: 420 Courtney Way, Lafayette, CO 80026

Hours/Program Year
Thorne’s Administrative Office at Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center is open Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm.
Thorne Nature Preschool runs Monday-Friday from 9:00am-1:00pm.
Aftercare in Lafayette runs from 1:00pm-4:30pm with the option to pick up anytime during that window of time.
The school year starts the Tuesday following Labor Day and runs through the Friday before Memorial Day.
Daily Schedule
Below is an example of what our daily schedule will likely look like. We will adapt the schedule as necessary throughout the year according to the class needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00am-9:15am</td>
<td>Drop off, free play, bathroom at the Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15am-9:30am</td>
<td>Opening circle with Song/Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30am-9:45am</td>
<td>Movement/Walking to Outdoor Learning Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45am-10:00am</td>
<td>Snack and Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00am-11:30am</td>
<td>Teacher-led Group Activities and Child-led Nature Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00pm-12:30pm</td>
<td>Handwashing, Lunch and nature play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30pm-12:45pm</td>
<td>Movement and walking back to building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45pm-1:00pm</td>
<td>Closing circle and Gratitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00pm-4:30pm</td>
<td>After Care in Lafayette will include nap/rest time, snack time, art activities, stories and play in the outdoor play area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Holidays and School breaks when Center is closed
The following holidays and breaks will coincide with the Boulder Valley School District breaks as often as possible.

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Break (no school Nov. 22-26 but care is available on Nov 22-23 for an extra fee)
- Winter holidays (2 weeks)
- Presidents’ Day
- Spring break (same week as BVSD)
- Professional Development/Teacher Work Days-
  - October 13th, closing at 1 p.m. for fall conference on November 12th and November 19th, January 18th, closing at 1 p.m. March 11th, April 22nd, April 25th, May 27th

Inclement Weather Closings
Thorne Nature Preschool will not operate when snow or extreme weather create conditions which are dangerous for young children and their families to travel to and from school. In making the decision to close, we will follow the lead of the Boulder Valley School District. Check the BVSD website or your local TV stations for the latest information. Thorne will also send out updates via text and email.

Rain Days/Lightning
For young children, rain can be as much fun as a sunny Colorado day, as long as they are dressed appropriately. Thorne Nature Preschool will be outdoors on rainy days, so please make sure to always pack a waterproof layer for your child. It is Thorne’s policy to hold preschool regardless of rain, but in the event of lightning, Thorne Nature Preschool will retreat indoors.
Clothing & Personal Belongings
Children will be mostly outdoors while at the Thorne Nature Preschool and should be dressed according to the weather. Children need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping, and climbing. Sneakers, well-fitting hiking boots, rain boots, snow boots, or closed-toe sandals work best. Closed-toed shoes are required at all times.
Clothing needs for each season include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waterproof</td>
<td>Waterproof/insulated</td>
<td>Rubber boots or</td>
<td>Close-toed sandals or shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber boots or</td>
<td>snow boots</td>
<td>Hiking books</td>
<td>Sun hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking boots</td>
<td>Waterproof snow pants</td>
<td>Jacket or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacket or</td>
<td>Waterproof winter coat</td>
<td>sweatshirt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweatshirt</td>
<td>Multiple insulating layers</td>
<td>Rain jacket</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain jacket</td>
<td>Waterproof mittens/gloves (2 pairs)</td>
<td>w/hood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/hood</td>
<td>Scarf/neck cover</td>
<td>Rain pants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain pants</td>
<td>Hat/ear covers</td>
<td>Hat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hat</td>
<td>Wool/fleece socks</td>
<td>Gloves/mittens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloves/mittens</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sun Hat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Hat</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All children must have two labeled changes of clothes:

1) One change of clothes will be kept at the Center for emergencies. Please include these items in a cloth bag (like a tote, pillowcase, or reusable produce bag) labeled with your child’s name that is easily visible on the outside of the bag.

2) The other change of clothes will be kept in the child’s backpack, which will be with us on site. A zippered wet bag is an ideal storage container for these clothes, since this allows teachers to be able to properly store wet or soiled clothing if necessary. Changes of clothes should include underwear, pants, shirt, and socks and should be changed for each season.

All clothing should be LABELED, including boots, mittens, coats, etc. Many will look the same. Although staff members will do their best to keep track of clothing, the Preschool is not responsible for lost articles of clothing.

Please provide your child with a backpack every day containing a large full bottle of water (make sure it doesn’t leak), a non-perishable snack, a stick sunscreen, insect repellent (during buggy months), a fleece or sweatshirt (even on warm days), a hat, a waterproof rain jacket (even on clear days), and one set of extra clothes.

All other equipment and supplies will be provided by the Preschool, including learning materials, games, art supplies, etc. The Preschool staff asks that children not
bring items such as toys, games, electronics, phones or money from home in order to keep personal belongings from getting lost or broken.

After Care Needs
If your child is attending After Care, please bring a labelled blanket for your child for napping. Thorne has nap mats and sheets that will be your child’s to use for the duration of the year. If your child would like a small stuffed animal for comfort during naptime, you are welcome to provide one. Thorne will ask parents to wash the sheet and blanket each week, per health department regulations.

Lost & Found Belongings and Personal Items
Throughout the year, a Lost & Found box is located at the Center- please check regularly for lost items.

Meals and Snacks
Children attending Thorne Nature Preschool must be provided with their own snacks, sack lunch, and water by the parent. All food should be ready to serve (meaning fruits peeled, sliced, etc. if necessary), and ideally in containers that children are able to manage independently. The Teacher, under childcare licensing requirements, must check lunches brought from children’s homes to determine if they meet one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs. If the child fails to bring a meal, or if the meal meets less than one-third of the child’s daily nutritional needs, Thorne will supply an adequate meal. Sharing food is strongly discouraged amongst the children for health and safety concerns. Safe drinking water is available to children at all times if water is forgotten or more is needed. Children are provided with the means for washing their hands prior to eating.

We plan to eat snacks and meal outdoors on most days, though we will use indoor space at the Center on some cold days for eating.

Policies on Guidance, Positive Instruction, and Discipline
Thorne Nature Preschool maintains a respectful early childhood environment and supports the social and emotional competence of children. Thorne promotes positive behavior through mentorship, acknowledgement, and encouragement. Staff are trained in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and behavior management techniques. These are practiced daily with children, and individualized support is provided as needed. With a focus on SEL, Thorne Nature Preschool fosters self-confidence and empathy for others through self-awareness, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

When necessary, staff will provide individualized social and emotional intervention supports and plans for children with input from parents/guardians of the child. Individualized plans focus on the encouragement of positive behavior, redirection,
safe de-escalation, and adaptations to encourage successful participation in the programs. Discipline shall be constructive or educational in nature, and may include such measures as separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, or praise for appropriate behavior with the intent of reducing challenging behavior. As a policy, children will not be subjected to any physical punishment or ridicule from Thorne staff. If additional support is needed, Thorne will access an early childhood mental health consultant or other specialist as needed through Mental Health Partners of Boulder County. Thorne staff will strive to prevent expulsion unless absolutely necessary for the safety and well-being of the other children.

**Challenging Behavior Issues and Consequences**

Staff are trained in how to deal with challenging behaviors and how to develop individualized plans for children who need them. Behavioral issues and interventions will be documented on a written incident report and communicated to parents. The plan of action will clearly outline interventions that will be used and the behavioral expectations that are required for the child to be allowed to remain in the program.

If appropriate individualized plans are ineffective and the child continues to behave inappropriately and/or interferes with the safety or learning of other children, the Preschool Director will evaluate whether or not the child may remain in the program.

**Field Trips**

During field trips, the ratio of 1 staff per 5 children will be maintained, and children will be actively supervised at all times. An itinerary of events will be carried by staff and a copy will remain at the Center and at Thorne’s headquarters at all times. Staff will carry information about each child, including: name, address, and phone number of the child’s physician or other appropriate health care professional, and written authorization from parent(s) or guardian(s) for emergency medical care. Additionally, a list of all children and staff on the field trip will be kept at Thorne’s headquarters and the Center. Each day that the Preschool participates in a field trip, parents must provide written permission for the child to participate in the activity at a specific location and date.

**Special Activities**

Special Activities are defined as activities that typically aren’t part of the preschool’s schedule or curriculum. Thorne provides a list of special activities it offers to parents or guardians, and notifies them in advance of all activities that occur away from the center (see field trips). Parents will be given the opportunity to indicate to Thorne staff if they don’t want their child to participate in an activity.
Transportation
Thorne may transport children or have parents/guardians transport children on a field trip away from the center. If children are being transported, Thorne will abide by the following policies:

1) Thorne will obtain written permission from parents or guardians for any transportation of their child during child care hours
2) Thorne will maintain a staff to child ratio of 1:10 during transportation
3) Thorne is responsible for any children it transports and abides by: applicable State and Federal motor vehicle laws, requirements for vehicles, and requirements for drivers
4) Children are not permitted to ride in the front seat of a vehicle and must remain seated when the vehicle is in motion
5) All children must be secured in a child restraint system appropriate for the age and development of each child
6) Children are loaded and unloaded out of the path of moving vehicles
7) Children are not permitted to stand or sit on the floor of a moving vehicle, and their arms, legs, and heads must remain inside the vehicle at all times.
8) Prior to a field trip or other excursion, the center must obtain information on liability insurance from parents and staff who transport children in their own cars and verify that all drivers have valid driver’s licenses.
9) Thorne drivers will complete a minimum of 4 hours of Department approved driver training

Road Safety
Thorne is responsible for any children it transports and abides by applicable State and Federal motor vehicle laws, including requirements for vehicles and drivers. Drivers must abide by the following rules:

1) The driver must wear a seatbelt, ensure all children are secured in a child restraint system appropriate for the age and development of each child, and ensure doors are secured all times while the vehicle is in operation
2) The driver will not eat, smoke, or use a mobile phone while driving
3) Drivers will operate the vehicle in a manner that is appropriate for the prevailing traffic, roadway, and environmental conditions
4) Drivers will not exceed the posted speed limit and will obey all traffic laws
5) Drivers will be responsible for paying all traffic and parking violations
6) Drivers will not be under the influence of any substance that may impair their driving, including drugs and alcohol
7) Drivers must have current CPR, First Aid, and Standard Precautions certificates and will carry a department approved first aid kit at all times
8) If an emergency occurs on the road, children should be moved to safety as soon as possible, parents notified, and the proper emergency procedures followed
Television and Video Viewing
TV/Videos will not be shown during Thorne Nature Preschool, and media use will be limited to research for learning purposes by staff.

Bathroom Use/Schedule
Children will always be within a 10-minute walk of an indoor bathroom with running warm water and will have access to using these bathrooms throughout the day as needed. Students will always be supervised when travelling to and from the restroom and during use (and they will be allowed privacy during use). Staff ratios always allow for one teacher to take a group of children to the restroom while allowing the remaining group to meet Childcare Licensing staff ratio requirements. When teachers/volunteers/interns are with students, the groups will always consist of at least 2 students.

Thorne Nature Preschool has a bathroom schedule in place that will be implemented daily, including procedures to ask children to use the bathroom at the Center at the start of each class session and before lunch.

In the event of a toileting accident, children will never be punished. Children will be cleaned appropriately by staff using Standard Precautions, and the necessary clothes will be changed. All soiled clothes will be placed in a sealed plastic bag or zippered wet bag, stored out of the reach of children, and given to the parents at the end of the day. All children will be required to have a set of clean, spare clothes each day, and Thorne staff will carry additional clean clothes to use as needed.

Handwashing
Handwashing per the guidance from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s Rules and Regulations Governing the Health and Sanitation of Child Care Facilities will be met at all times. Handwashing will always occur after using the toilet and before eating. Handwashing will be supervised and taught to children when necessary.

Diapering and toilet training
Thorne Nature Preschool requires children to be toilet trained by the time they enroll in the program.

Special Needs
Thorne is an equal opportunity employer and is cognizant of both federal and state legislation that support opportunities and fair treatment for all. Thorne’s Anti-Discrimination policy is outlined in its Employee Policies Manual and staff are advised of the policy during their orientation. Thorne makes efforts to accommodate children with disabilities and who have special needs in compliance with the Americans with
Disabilities Act, Titles I-V. Our facilities are wheelchair accessible and Thorne makes efforts to enroll and place children with disabilities in our program.

Due to the outdoor venue and physical nature of the program, children must be sighted and ambulatory to attend Thorne Nature Preschool. There are several hikes that are not suitable for non-sighted children as they are steep with loose rock, posing an accident hazard to the child. If your child has a disability other than those listed above, please contact the Preschool Director to see if accommodations can be made. Teachers are not specifically trained in care for children with disabilities, so often times we recommend that a parent or guardian attend to accompany the child. Our primary concern is for the safety of all children.

Illness
If a child is ill, Thorne asks parents to keep them home until 24 hours after children are symptom free or fever free. This is so that children can get better and it protects the health of the other children and adults in the program.
If a child says that they are feeling ill during program hours, they will be given the option to lay down on the Nap Pad to see if it passes. If after 10-20 minutes they are still feeling ill or if there are clear symptoms of illness, parents will be called to pick up their child.
During the pandemic, we will be following Thorne’s COVID Health Policies

Communicable Illnesses
When a child shows signs of a severe or communicable illness, they will be separated from other children, the parent/guardian notified, and a doctor or medical facility consulted as needed regarding treatment. In case of a known communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia or shigella, the Director will report to the local health department pursuant to regulations of the State Department of Public Health and Environment and contact all parents/guardians of children in care.

Accidents and Injuries
A written report is submitted when any accident or injury, however minor, occurs while the children are in our care. If the accident or injury is minor, the parent will be notified and given a copy of the written report at the end of the day. For more serious accidents or injuries, the child will be taken by Emergency Medical Services to the nearest medical facility or that which is stated by the parent/guardian on the Medical Authorization and Release Form, and the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be contacted immediately. At all times, staff will have the means to provide emergency transportation to a health care facility.

All staff are trained in Thorne’s Incident and Emergency Procedures and Safety Plans. Staff are also trained and receive certifications in Standard Precautions, First Aid,
CPR, and Medication Administration. Staff must carry a fully stocked first aid kit and Thorne's “Incident and Emergency Flow Chart” at all times.

Visitors
During the COVID-19 pandemic, Thorne will not be allowing visitors to the program.

Standard Visitor Policy
All visitors must arrange their visit through the Preschool Director, who will notify the staff of the reason for the visit as well as the date, time, location, and number of visitors to expect. All visitors must sign in with the on the day of their visit on the “Visitor Log” which includes: name, date, phone number, address, reason for visit, and a driver’s license number. A written policy regarding visitors will be posted and a record maintained daily.

Filing a Complaint
Thorne Nature Preschool is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a child care facility. See the Director for a copy of the most recent Report of Inspection. Thorne provides written information to parents at the time of admission and staff members at the time of employment on how to file a complaint concerning suspected licensing violations. This information includes: “To file a complaint about this facility contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203, 303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876”

Parental Notification
Thorne will notify parents/guardians if the program is no longer able to serve children. Thorne will notify parents or guardians in writing of significant changes in its services, policies, or procedures so that they can decide whether the center continues to meet the needs of the child.
If a child is withdrawn from a Thorne program for any reason, the parent/guardian is responsible for notifying the Preschool Director in writing and will lose their program deposit.

Pick Up and Drop Off Policies and Procedures
Release of Children
All children will be signed in and out daily by their parent/guardian. Children will only be released to those individuals listed on the “Parent/Guardian Release Form” and the center has written authorization. Thorne staff are responsible for knowing who is on the form when releasing children.
Late pick Up Policy
Parents must arrive to pick up their child at the designated end time of the program. If a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the program, staff will make attempts to reach parents and other contacts listed on the emergency form and the parent will be charged a $1 per minute child-care fee. If a child still has not been picked up an hour after the end of the program, authorities will be notified and a child-care fee of $1 per minute childcare fee will be assessed. In any case, authorized staff will remain with children until a parent or guardian picks them up. Staff will check all rooms and account for all children before leaving for the day.

Late Arrival
If children arrive late to Thorne and their group is away from the center or on a field trip or excursion, parents can call the Director to meet group at their location. The Director may meet parent and child and direct them to their group or ask the parent/guardian to find the group at their current location. Parents will sign in their child as they normally would for drop off.

Unauthorized Pick-Up
Children will only be released to those individuals listed on the Parent/Guardian Release Form. In an emergency situation, a parent may confirm an additional person to pick up his/her child over the phone through verbal authorization. In the case that someone not listed on the form or verbally confirmed by the parent tries to pick up a child, the child will not be released and the individual will be asked to leave.

Community
Thorne Nature Preschool values building a strong, supportive, inclusive community between classmates, families, and preschool staff. To this end, Thorne holds family events to celebrate nature and the changing seasons throughout the year. We know that learning doesn't end when preschool ends, and that there is nothing more important than family to a young child. Thorne believes that a healthy, rich, meaningful sense of community within the Nature Preschool cultivates the human connection that is equally as important as nature connection.

Birthdays
Our goal is to celebrate each child on their birthday by honoring their life experiences and interests rather than by celebrating with food. The birthday child will be involved in planning a school activity that they would enjoy doing with their peers. Before each child's birthday we will contact parents to gather stories and a few photos that can be shared with the class during snack time.

Communications
Thorne’s goal is to cultivate a strong, supportive, inclusive community between classmates, families, and preschool staff. Thorne has an open door policy on
communication between staff and parents, and will conduct formal conference times to inform the parents or guardians of children’s academic progress, as well as their social, emotional, and physical abilities. Staff are available before and after school each day for informal check-in conversations as well.

Regular, ongoing communication between family and school is the best way to ensure that Preschool staff are able to provide a positive, supportive school experience that is meeting children’s needs. The Preschool staff does their best to keep parents informed about daily happenings and program updates.

Daily: updates via the app, Seesaw
Bi-monthly: Thorne Nature Preschools Newsletters
Email: If parents have information about children that should be passed along to multiple people (Preschool Volunteers, Teachers, other Thorne staff, etc.), we ask that it be sent via email if possible. This will allow us to share appropriate information effectively. If you ever have any questions about the Preschool or your child’s experience, please contact the Preschool Director.

If it is necessary to contact Preschool staff during class time, enrolled families can reach their teacher by messaging through Seesaw. If you need to call the teacher in case of an emergency, you may call this number 303-900-5401 in Boulder and this number 303-900-5469 in Lafayette. This number will be monitored between 8:30 am – 5:30 pm on school days, and will ring to a cell phone of a teacher who is on site. Please use this only when necessary so that teachers can remain engaged with children as much as possible during school hours.

Health and Safety Plan
Thorne is deeply committed to the operation of a program that is safe, organized, thoughtful, and will improve the health and well-being of children in our community. To this end, all staff and volunteers participate in a Building and Physical Premises Safety Training, including the identification and protection from hazards and the handling and storage of hazardous materials and disposal of bio contaminants.

At each location that the Preschool visits has a detailed Safety Plan, identifying and protecting against hazards specific to the site. Each day, staff check the area for hazards before the start of the program and actively communicate important information with children.

Identifying Where Children are at All Times
Thorne Staff will maintain sight and voice contact with children at all times while children are under their supervision. Thorne Staff will conduct silent headcounts every 15 minutes and verbal headcounts before and after transitions.
**Missing Person(s)**
Children will be taught to stay put if they ever become separated from the group and call out for help. Should it be discovered that a child is missing from the group, a staff member will stay with the group while another methodically searches the area for the missing child and calls out their name until they are found.

**Medication Policy**
All Thorne Staff are trained in Medication Administration, First Aid, CPR, and Standard Precautions. If a child needs medication administered while under the care of Thorne, parents/guardians must complete all necessary medication forms. When possible, parents are encouraged to administer medication to their child prior to and after the programs instead of sending medication. When necessary, staff with Medication Administration Certification will keep and administer medication with the required medication forms (written parental consent AND authorization of the prescribing practitioner). Without these required forms, the child with a reported medical condition will not be permitted to attend the Preschool. Medications must be kept in the original labeled bottle or container and must contain the original pharmacy label. Over-the-counter medication must be kept in the originally labeled container and be labeled with the child’s first and last name. Medications will be kept in an area inaccessible to children but carried if group is away from the Center. Controlled medications must be counted and safely secured, in a locked container. A written medication log must be kept for each child and is part of the child’s records.

**Child Abuse Reporting Policy**
All Staff and volunteers are background checked for a criminal history and abuse and neglect. Thorne staff read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect pursuant to state law and outlining the staff member’s personal responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse or neglect according to state law. Thorne staff are also required to complete an annual Child Abuse Prevention course. Staff who have reasonable cause to suspect or knowledge of a child who has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed a child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect will immediately report the incident to the Preschool Director and the proper reporting agency. If a parent believes that his/her child has been abused, s/he should seek immediate assistance by calling The Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, 1-844-CO-4-Kids.

**Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan**
Please see details of our plans for emergency situations located in a separate safety handbook.
Parent Handbook Sign Off

(Program copy)

My signature below indicates that I have received the Thorne Nature Preschool Parent Handbook, and I understand and accept responsibility for all that is involved in having my child(ren) in the care of Thorne Nature Preschool. I also understand that my child and I are responsible for adhering to all of the policies and procedures as started in this Parent Handbook. Failure to abide may result in my child’s dismissal from the program.

________________________________________
Parent Name (print)

________________________________________
Parent Signature

________________________________________
Date