



**evergreen kids corner cooperative preschool**

201 South 8th Street, Hamilton, MT, 59840 • 406-363-1688 • [evergreenkidscorner.org](http://evergreenkidscorner.org)

# Family Handbook

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# WELCOME!

The Board of Directors of Evergreen Kids Corner Preschool welcomes you! We are excited and optimistic about this school year and want every parent to be well informed and to feel as much a part of the preschool as possible.

**Please read this entire handbook carefully. It is EKC's policy that we obtain a signature from all parents stating that they have read and understand the information contained in this handbook.**

A cooperative preschool is a unique type of school. In order for a cooperative preschool to be successful, each family has to be committed to creating an enriching and safe learning environment for their child through participation. This may not always fit each family's schedule.

Preschool cooperatives date back to the 1940s, and Cambridge, Massachusetts was home to some of the oldest co-ops. Today, cooperative preschools are enjoying a renaissance thanks, in part, to changing attitudes toward work and family and by parents' desires to play a larger role in their child's development and education.

What do parents do? At Evergreen Kids Corner, co-op members serve on the board of directors and/or committees. They aid in making budget decisions, hiring teachers and setting policy. Members also help in daily activities. Parents rotate responsibilities, for example, by serving as Parent Helper, assisting the teacher in the classroom and providing and helping prepare the daily snack. They also participate in work days and put time into projects such as fundraisers and field trips.

The time commitment to the school and its kids can be significant, but should not be onerous. Most parents enjoy their parent jobs; they make a meaningful contribution to their child's education, form lasting friendships with other families and learn new skills, all by contributing a few days per month.

The strength and quality of a co-op is a reflection of what member families bring to it, and Evergreen Kids Corner has enjoyed the contributions of many members over the years. Our families come from all walks of life with varied backgrounds, including artists, farmers, scientists, lawyers, doctors, teachers, homemakers, construction workers and musicians – white collar, blue collar and no collar. What they share is a deep belief in the importance of the family-school partnership and in the idea that communities as well as families play vital roles in a child's development.

Our family-friendly environment encourages active involvement from parents, and they are welcome at the school at any time. Parents are encouraged, and sometimes required, to participate in the following ways: acting as Parent Helper, attending monthly Board Meetings, fundraising, serving on parent committees and completing seasonal block hours (fall, spring, and summer). It is also the parent's responsibility to keep informed by reading the Parent Handbook, bulletin board notices, emails, and checking their child's cubby at school.

## **Philosophy**

We believe that children learn by exploring concepts through hands-on activities, blocks of uninterrupted play and opportunities to explore both outdoors and indoors. They learn best in caring, respectful relationships with peers and adults and in an atmosphere

that celebrates the wonder of everyday life. EKC strives to provide a nature-based curriculum where children are given daily opportunities to interact with items and places that can be found in our beautiful valley.

## **Goals**

We strive to provide an environment that promotes active exploration and interaction with adults, other children and materials, with the Teacher as a facilitator. We provide learning activities that are concrete, real and meaningful to the lives of young children and foster their self-esteem through relationships with adults who express acceptance and respect for all children. We recognize that all children are different and encourage such differences to surface in daily activities. We encourage outlets for the expression of each child's individual creative potential and create an environment that allows children to use problem-solving skills with peers and adults in social situations with guidance and supervision as needed.

## **History of EKC**

A group of dedicated parents began a parent cooperative preschool in 1980. In 1989, parents formed a corporation, christened the school Evergreen Kids Corner, and purchased the wood-frame house at 201 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In 2001, parents enlarged and remodeled the building and expanded the program.

## **Board of Directors**

A board of directors, comprised of parent members, administers the school. The BOD shall be made up of four officers, one alumni member (if available) and one class representative from each class. The four officers (President, Vice-president, Treasurer and Secretary) serve a 16 month term (May-August). The class representatives serve a 12 month term (September-August). The Alumni member serves a

9 month term (September-May). Members elect all officers and representatives, and each position requires attendance at the monthly board meetings.

The new President, VP, Treasurer and Secretary are voted in at the annual spring meeting in May. These new officers shadow the old officers and do not begin voting until September. The new Class Representatives are voted in at the annual fall meeting in September.

### **School Meetings/ Socials**

School meetings are held each month; the time and place will be posted at EKC on the door and communicated via email. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend and participate in all school meetings. Babysitting will be provided at the school during the spring and fall all-parent meetings for a fee of \$5.00 per child. Additional meetings and/or socials may be called by the Board of Directors or the parents.

Mandatory all membership meetings are held in fall and spring. At the fall meeting parents will receive information on EKC, as well as sign up for committees, parent helper days and cleaning days, vote in the new Class Representatives, approve the budget, and learn about participation in the preschool such as upcoming fundraisers. At the spring meeting, parents will vote in a President, VP, Treasurer and Secretary, fill the Pee Wee Soccer Committee, discuss priorities for the following school year's budget and plan the graduation potluck. At the end of the school year, in spring, a potluck for the whole school will be held during which the Teacher presents completion certificates and/or awards to the children.

## NON-PROFIT STATUS

Evergreen Kids Corner Preschool is classified as a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. It does not retain a profit for its work and is not owned by any individual; rather, it is run collectively by a Board of Directors. Tuition seldom covers all the costs needed to run the many programs at EKC. Fundraising and contributions enable us to provide much-needed services for the children attending EKC.

## 2017-2018 CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

2-year old class: Children should be two years old by September 10<sup>th</sup> of the current school year.\* Class size is limited to 8 students.

3 year old class: Children must be three years old by September 10<sup>th</sup> of the current school year. Class size is limited to 12 students.

Pre-Kindergarten class: Children must be four years old by September 10<sup>th</sup>. Class size is limited to 12 students.

Class limits may be reduced or expanded by the Board of Directors in consultation with the teacher.

\*Underage children in the 2 year old class will be accepted on a case by case basis, and will need the following: a recommendation by the teacher, be 24 months old by December 10<sup>th</sup>, voted in by the BOD and repeat the 2 year old class the following school year.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

<u>2 year old class:</u>	Tues. and Thurs.	9:00am - 12:00pm
<u>3 year old class:</u>	Mon., Wed., Fri.	9:00am - 12:00pm
<u>Pre-K class:</u>	Monday-Thursday	12:30pm - 3:30pm

## ENROLLMENT

Evergreen Kids Corner Preschool does not discriminate in the administration of its program.

To enroll, parents should submit the registration form along with a non-refundable registration fee of \$35. A child is considered enrolled when the Secretary or Treasurer receives the completed registration form and fee. A child may enter throughout the year as space permits. If you have two children in school, the registration fee for the first child is \$35 and \$25 for the second child.

Priority enrollment is reserved for currently enrolled children and takes place throughout the month of March. Beginning on April 1<sup>st</sup>, siblings of current students and alumni have second priority through April 15<sup>th</sup>, after which time registration is open to the public and continues throughout the school year on a first-come, first-served basis until full enrollment is achieved.

Registration forms are available at Evergreen Kids Corner Preschool, 201 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Hamilton, MT 59840, or by calling the school at 363-1688.

## TOILETING

We encourage toileting independence. We understand that accidents happen. Communication regarding toileting issues is important, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you and your child. Diapers and/or extra underwear and clothes must be provided by the child's parents.

## **REQUIRED CHILD'S RECORDS (UPDATED YEARLY)**

1. Current Registration Form: Please report any changes in address, phone numbers, email, etc.
2. Parent Contracts: Parent or Guardian must initial each line and sign this form.
3. Emergency contact and medical treatment authorization: Parent or Guardian must fill out and sign this form.
4. Health Record: EKC requires a signed, dated medical form which includes immunizations, health history, and physician's permission to participate in pre-school activities. Signed and notarized affidavit of exemption from immunization will also be accepted.
5. Liability Waiver: Parent or Guardian must sign this form which releases EKC from any liability concerns.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Students should arrive during the 5-minute period preceding each class. Please avoid arriving prior to these times; this is teacher prep and/or lunch time.

Upon arrival, please bring your child into the school and sign her or him in. Encourage your child to hang up her or his jacket, backpack, etc. in her or his cubby before joining the group. **Please check the bulletin boards and near the sign-in area for important information.**

When picking up your child, please come in and sign your child out and check his or her cubby for papers and completed work. Our Teachers may have obligations after class and are not paid to stay late, so please do your best to pick your child up on time.

**STUDENTS OF EKC WILL NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, BE RELEASED TO ANY ADULT WHOSE NAME HAS NOT BEEN PROVIDED. A PARENT OR GUARDIAN MAY ADD NAMES TO THE AUTHORIZATION FORM AT ANY TIME.**

## **EKC FEES**

### **Registration Fee**

Each school year there is a one time, non-refundable registration fee of \$35 per child. If you have two children to enroll, the fee will be reduced. The registration fee for the first child is \$35 and \$25 for the second child.

### **Tuition Policy**

Tuition rates are set by the Board of Directors. Tuition is due the first day of every month. Payments received after the 15<sup>th</sup> will incur a \$35 late fee. Checks should be placed in the Tuition Box located in the entryway.

Parents must pay any bank charges if a check is returned due to insufficient funds.

**There will be no reduction in fees for individual days missed due to illness, holidays, weather, vacation, etc.**

### **Non Parent-Helper and Non Committee Fees**

**\*\*\*If a family decides to opt out of its committee or parent-helper obligations, this decision must be made prior to child starting classes and tuition fees will be adjusted as follows:**

CO-OP REQUIREMENTS	ADDITIONAL FEES
Parent Helper	\$30 per opt out day
Committee	\$35 per month
3 hour volunteer requirement for Fall PWS, Spring PWS and Summer Explorer	\$30 per season (fall, spring, summer)
No-show fee	\$30 for 1 <sup>st</sup> incident, \$50 for subsequent incidents

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

### **Parent Helper**

EVERY DAY, A PARENT MUST BE PRESENT TO ASSIST THE TEACHER IN CONDUCTING THE CLASS, HELPING WITH ACTIVITIES, BRINGING OR PREPARING A HEALTHY SNACK AND CLEANING UP. **CLASS WILL BE CANCELLED IF THERE IS NO PARENT HELPER.** Parent Helpers need to plan to help in the classroom on a rotating basis. In the event that the class size is very small, parents will be required to provide snack and assist in daily cleaning responsibilities. Parent helping will still be required but the frequency will be determined by the families and the teacher.

**PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST ASPECTS OF CLASSROOM MAINTENANCE AND CLEAN-UP.**

You must make arrangements with another parent if you are unable to help on your scheduled Parent-Helper day. Parents who do not arrange for a substitute when they cannot parent help will be assessed a \$30 fine the first time and another \$50 fine if a second day is missed.

(In the event of a true emergency, the Board of Directors may waive the fines.)

**Parent Helper Duties:**

- The number one responsibility for all Parent Helpers is to supervise all children for safety.
- For our classes to run efficiently and effectively, **you must be on time.**
- Assist children with projects as directed by the Teacher.
- Assist children as necessary with clean-up of work centers.
- Wipe snack tables with disinfectant; set table for snack; assist in hand washing.
- Bring, prepare and clean up after snack.
- Load dishwasher and wipe down kitchen counter and tables.
- Sweep floor and vacuum carpeted area.
- Clean bathroom sinks and check supplies for: soap, toilet paper and paper towels.
- Perform additional cleaning duties depending on your Parent-Helper day (see list in kitchen).

**Please note... a list of children with food allergies will be posted in the kitchen.**

Please remember, if you bring your baby or toddler on your Parent Helper day, you are still expected to fully participate and see that all tasks assigned to you are completed.

### **Weekly and Monthly Cleaning**

A thorough cleaning of the preschool is done on a WEEKLY basis. At the beginning of the school year there will be a “To-Do” list for parents to follow on their parent helper days. Additionally, EKC members are asked to participate in bi-annual cleaning days to do deep cleaning of the school during school breaks and families sign up to clean the school for fall and spring block hour commitments.

### **Committee Responsibilities**

At the Fall All members meeting, all families will be asked to sign up to work on a committee of their choice and to sign up for three 3-hour block volunteer shifts, one taking place during fall PeeWee Soccer (fall block hours), one taking place during spring PeeWee Soccer (spring block hours), and one taking place during Summer Explorers (summer block hours). Any family joining the school after the meeting will be asked to sign up for these duties by the Secretary.

### **Fines**

In the event that a fine is necessary, the Treasurer will notify the parents. The parents will have 30 days to pay the fine, or they may be asked to leave the program. Fines should be paid by placing the amount due in the tuition box in the entryway. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the fines can be appealed to the Board of Directors.

## **SNACKS**

We recognize the need for young children to have **healthy, nutritional light snacks** during the day. Parents will bring the snack for class on their Parent Helper day. Please bring a snack for each

child in the class. Drinks may be water or decaffeinated tea, which EKC will provide. A snack list will be dispersed for your convenience. If your child has a food allergy or medical condition that prohibits certain foods, please provide a note to be posted and for your child's file.

**We are a nut-free environment due to the serious reactions of nut allergies. This includes all nut butters and products of any kind. Hard candies, popcorn, hot dogs (whole or sliced) and grapes present a choking hazard to small children and are not allowed in the school at anytime.**

*Please bring a non-perishable snack for 10-12 children on your child's first day of school. This will be stored in the EKC pantry and will be used as needed.*

## **WEATHER**

### **DELAYS**

EKC **DOES NOT** follow the Hamilton Public Schools lead when it comes to weather delays. Class will proceed as usual unless you receive a call from your Class Representative, Board member or Teacher stating that class has been cancelled or delayed.

### **WINTER OUTSIDE PLAYTIME**

If it is below 10 degrees, children will not go outside to play. Children will go outside if it is 10 degrees or higher. Please make sure you bring hats, mittens/gloves, waterproof footwear, jackets/snowsuits for your children during the winter months.

## **CLOTHING AND TOYS**

Because of the wide range of activities your child will participate in, it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothes. We do take the children outdoors year round, so please dress your child accordingly. **Please label jackets/snowsuits, mittens/gloves, boots, and hats with your child's name.**

Please keep in mind that we will be doing messy activities such as cooking and painting. Painting aprons are provided. Please send and label an extra set of clothes to school with your child at the beginning of the school year so we may keep these at school all year in case of an accident. Place extra clothing in a bag marked with your child's name.

EKC provides plenty of creative toys on a rotational basis, so we ask that you do not send toys with your child to preschool unless the Teacher requests them. This eliminates a broken heart if a favorite toy were to be lost or broken.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an important part of our preschool. These trips support our concept of introducing children to their world around them. Transportation for field trips will be solicited from parents. We will need extra parents to participate for these special excursions and a sign-up sheet will be posted. Written permission from the parent with emergency contacts listed is required for children to go on field trips. We require any 2-year-old attending a field trip to be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Should parents choose not to have their child participate, they should be kept at home as EKC will not provide alternative activities. Attending a field trip does not

count toward parent helping duties unless you signed up to act as parent helper on the day the field trip occurred.

If you are a parent driver for a field trip you will be expected to provide EKC with a copy of your current Montana drivers' license, registration and proof of \$300,000 liability insurance. Seat belts and/or car seats for each child are required. Parents will need to provide a car seat and are responsible for ensuring that the car seat is properly installed. Also, no child will be allowed to sit in the front seat if the vehicle has front or side air bags.

## **TEACHER INFORMATION**

State guidelines require only a high school diploma to teach preschool. At EKC we strive to have our teachers meet a higher standard.

Our 2 year old and 3 year old teacher, Brittany McKenzie, holds a BA in Child Development and Family Studies from the University of North Carolina and a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction (Early Childhood Special Education emphasis) from the University of Montana. Over the past 15 years, she has worked in a variety of roles within the early childhood field including preschool teacher, home visitor, behavior consultant, and a program administrator. Our Pre-K teacher, Dulcie Belanger, has a BFA from the University of Montana and has more than 20 years experience teaching. Both teachers have met the requirements of infant and child CPR and First Aid, and have passed the requisite background check. We are pleased to offer exceptional instructors and an excellent curriculum!

Our teachers have created a safe learning environment for preschoolers, promoting exploration, self-control, appropriate social behaviors, and most importantly, FUN!

The curriculum has been designed to accommodate the developmental stages of each child, stimulating growth with support to ensure the success of mastery attempts.

## **HOME VISITS**

In late fall, your child's teacher will be asking you if you would like for her to visit your home. Home visits are optional and will only be completed if you are comfortable with having one. The purpose of this visit is to give your child a chance to "show off" his or her home, family, pets, and toys and to give the teacher the opportunity to connect more deeply with both you and your child. Both teachers will use the information from their visits to strengthen their relationships with each child, plan activities based on children's interests, and create stronger ties between the school and home.

Please do not stress or worry about having your teacher to your home--she isn't coming to check and see if you do the dishes, have a huge pile of laundry, or haven't cleaned your toilets in months!

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

One of the most important activities at EKC is conference time with parents. It gives our teachers an opportunity to learn more about your child from you as well as share their observations of your child here at school. Your child's teacher will be observing your child and gathering information throughout the year. They look for change and growth rather than knowledge of some specific facts. The conference will encompass all areas of development -- social, emotional, physical, and intellectual. Conferences are usually held in November and March. A sign-up sheet for parent/teacher conferences will be posted on the sign in bulletin board.

Anytime you have a question or concern about your child in preschool or at home, please talk to your child’s teacher. Please don’t feel you must wait until conference time to mention concerns.

## **PARENTAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

EKC welcomes comments and suggestions to improve the quality of care for your child. When areas of concern arise, please do the following:

1. Bring the problem to the attention of the Teacher who will hear your suggestion and/or grievance and attempt to work through the problem. The teacher will write your grievance down to ensure that she understands your concern and can act accordingly.
2. If additional communication is necessary, the problem can be taken to your class representative, who will write down your grievance and then take it to the appropriate board members.
3. On issues requiring a meeting between parent and teacher to resolve a conflict, the Class Representative and a neutral board member (defined as a board member who isn’t personally invested in the particular class) shall be on hand at the meeting and report back to the board on the issue.

We strongly encourage direct communication among parents and teachers. If such direct talk has not been attempted, the Board will be reluctant to take action on a matter.

## **HEALTH, MEDICAL AND SAFETY PRACTICES**

### **Illness/Isolations and Removal Procedures**

If any of these conditions exist, **DO NOT** send your child to school:

1. Undiagnosed rash
2. Significant respiratory distress
3. Vomiting and/or diarrhea
4. Elevated temperature (100°F or higher)
5. Throat infection or difficulty swallowing; ear infection
6. Bacterial infection; streptococcal pharyngitis (Strep Throat) or impetigo
7. Contagious conjunctivitis (pink eye) or pus draining from the eye
8. Evidence of lice, scabies, ringworm, or other parasitic infestation

If your child gets sick during preschool, we will call you to come and pick her/him up. If we cannot reach you, we will call the persons you designate on the emergency contact. Your child will be separated from the other children and made comfortable. Someone will stay with your child until you arrive.

Parents are requested to notify the Teacher if their child has been exposed to any contagious disease outside the school. Parents should **immediately notify** the Teacher when a child has a contagious disease. If children have been exposed to a communicable disease while at preschool, parents will be notified. There is a child illness sheet posted in the entry way for all parents to see.

**Please remember!** If you or your child is ill on your scheduled Parent Helper day it is still your responsibility to find a substitute to cover and provide a snack.

**Hand Washing:** Hands will be washed before snack, after bathroom use and after handling an ill child; every effort will be made to also wash hands after nose blowing or wiping and after outside play.

**Toys and Equipment:** Toys will be sanitized as needed with an anti-bacterial solution.

**Evacuation Drills:** Drills will be conducted throughout the school year. Evacuation plans will be posted on the wall next to exits.

**Medication Policy:** EKC does not dispense or apply medications.

**Accidents and Injuries:** First Aid will be administered to a child needing care. Each accident will be recorded on an accident report sheet. Parents will be notified of any head injury. EKC requires the teacher to maintain a current CPR and First Aid certificate. A First Aid kit is located in the EKC office.

**Emergency Procedures:** All actions necessary to ensure the health and safety of a child will be taken in the event of a medical emergency or serious injury. In a life-threatening emergency, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital. Parents will be notified immediately following all serious injuries and in most cases, will make the decision regarding the need for medical intervention.

**Reporting Child Abuse:** Any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect involving parents and child or Teacher and child will be reported to the proper authorities immediately.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline practices are founded on Dr. Becky Bailey’s philosophy of “conscious” discipline, based on teaching through the understanding of human behavior and brain development. The goal is to teach children self-control through conflict resolution techniques and communication skills. A “Time Out” is not used, and is instead

replaced with a “Safe Place” in the classroom, and children will learn to use the designated area when they are in distress. The approach is not about punishment but of teaching self-control. The development of a “school family” will create unity, acceptance and safety.

Steps in assisting with problem solving:

1. Discern who owns the problem
2. Offer empathy to children who make “poor” choices
3. Ask the child to think, “How could I solve the problem?”
4. Encourage the child to create her/his own solution.

Steps in delivering imposed consequences:

1. Present the child with the choice of skills to use or the rule.
2. Present the child with the imposed consequences of choosing the old, hurtful behavior / breaking the rule.
3. State why the consequence is being imposed and relate it to safety.
4. Ask the child what she has heard and understood.
5. Listen carefully to the child and clarify any miscommunications.
6. If the child repeats the behavior, deliver the designated consequences with empathy and choices.

For serious and recurrent behavioral incidents, the following procedure will be used. Major incidents will be defined as frequently dangerous behavior (premeditated frequent violent behavior including physical attacks such as hitting, kicking, etc.) that are not developmentally or age appropriate.

1. On the first occurrence, the child will be sent home for the rest of the day and the teacher will schedule a meeting with the parents. The teacher will begin to collect data daily, using the EKC Behavior Incident Form and ABC charts.
2. On the second occurrence, the child will be sent home for the rest of the day, and at the discretion of the teacher and family, the child may be removed from class for a week. The teacher will schedule a meeting with the parents, the teacher, a neutral board member (defined as a board member who isn't personally invested in the class where the behavior is occurring), and the class rep. The teacher will continue to collect data daily, using the behavior incident form and ABC charts. A closed board meeting will be held to discuss the situation, discuss supports and make a recommendation to hire an assistant to help in the classroom.
3. On the third occurrence, a meeting will be held to discuss the appropriateness of the school as a placement for the child. This meeting will include the teacher, the same neutral board member, the parent rep, and the parents. At this meeting, the group may consider removing the child from the classroom for a short time or permanently.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Photographs or video tape are taken of the children periodically. We may use them in the newspaper and at various programs. Families are given the opportunity to give permission or opt out of having photographs used as part of the initial enrollment paperwork. A

family can change their permission by giving a signed statement to the Secretary.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Should a parent choose to withdraw her/his child from the school, verbal and written notification is requested from the parent as soon as possible after the decision is made.

## **IN SUMMATION...**

Our most fundamental objective is to provide a safe, clean, healthy, and loving environment in which each child feels that she/he is loved, valued and wanted. Thank you for sharing your child with us!

Revised June 2010  
Revised August 2012  
Revised January 2015  
Revised February 2016  
Revised July 2017

Revised August 2011  
Revised August 2014  
Revised August 2015  
Revised August 2016