



*Member
Handbook*

Fall 2019 - Spring 2020

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Essence of the Waldorf Early Childhood Classroom

These are the things that matter most for young children. What you say, what you teach, does not yet make an impression, except insofar as children imitate what you say in their own speech. But it is what you are that matters; if you are good this goodness will appear in your gestures; and if you are bad tempered this also will appear in your gestures, in short, everything that you do yourself passes over into the children and makes its way within them. This is the essential point. Children are wholly sense organs, and react to all the impressions of the people around them. Therefore the essential thing is not to imagine that children can learn what is good or bad, that they can learn this or that, but to know that everything that is done in their presence is transformed in their childish organisms into spirit, soul, and body. The health of children for their whole life depends on how you conduct yourself in their presence. The inclinations that children develop depend on how you behave in their presence.

Rudolf Steiner

The Kingdom of Childhood
(Lecture 2)

Welcome!

We warmly welcome you to our Waldorf-inspired Early Childhood Program at *Seeds of Joy Village (SOJV)*. We strive to follow, independently to a large extent, the international Waldorf School movement founded by the philosopher Rudolf Steiner. In addition *Seeds of Joy Village* is also an incorporated, non-profit, license-exempt parent participation program where parents play an integral role. From working in the classroom, planning festivals or serving on the board of directors, *Seeds of Joy Village* relies on its members to support the lead teacher in bringing life to the program.

We, the Teacher, the Assistant Teacher and the Board of Directors, hope that this handbook will serve as a bridge between your child's home and school life as we become partners in nurturing and raising your child. We recognize the important work you do at home as a parent. In this handbook we offer ways you can support this program and your child's healthy development at home. Such advice is offered in the spirit of partnership and collaboration, as we work together to create a healthy environment in which the children can thrive.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the year. We hope this manual will be helpful and give you some insight into how our program operates and what is expected of a member. We are looking forward to a wonderful year together!

With warmth and gratitude,

Ms. Alethea Dufraigne - President (On Behalf of the Board of Directors)

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An Education in Freedom

The Waldorf education is an education in freedom. "A Waldorf education teaches children how to think, not what to think, and to develop themselves as well-rounded individuals with an innate curiosity and love of learning," says Jamie Quirk, Communications and Outreach Director at the Waldorf School of Princeton, New Jersey. "When the children leave the Waldorf environment, they are equipped to rely on their own inner compasses to help steer them on their individual journeys, rather than fit into one specific niche."

Learn more at www.whywaldorffworks.org

Our Philosophy

The Waldorf early childhood philosophy is based on the conviction that the young child learns by imitating what is beautiful and meaningful. Each child's innate capacity for wonder, reverence and awe is valued and nurtured in a carefully designed program and

environment. Throughout the year, we strive to nurture joy, intelligence and respect in the individual child, the family and within our local and global communities.

In the spirit of nurturing joy, intelligence and respect, *Seeds of Joy Village* is a parent participation program where parents play an integral role in supporting the lead teacher.

Our Vision, Mission & Values

VISION:

(Why we do what we do?)

A Waldorf Education is a living and healing education, and as such, it is transformative for both the child and the family. At *Seeds of Joy Village*, we strive to change the world through healing ourselves and our children one day at a time.

MISSION:

(How we do what we do?)

Seeds of Joy Village is a magical place where the teacher embraces each and every day what the children bring to class — joy, wonder, humor, fear, hope, but most of all trust. Parents learn by observing the children interact with each other under the loving guidance of a supportive, empathetic and loving teacher who knows the importance of setting appropriate boundaries. When children trust their teacher and other adults in their daily environment, they grow up feeling confident and secure, knowing that the world is a good place.

As the year progresses our families form closer bonds as they participate and support the lead teacher in various ways by modeling joy, excitement, love and trust. Like our young children, parents are willing and excited to try and learn new things. At times learning can be challenging and a bit frustrating in an environment where parents might be asked to explore and discover rather than simply follow already thought-out instructions, but this is what children face on a daily basis as they learn to find their way around in this world. For the children and in-class parents alike, there is freedom within our rhythm so creativity can flourish. In that way, children, parents and teachers work together to transform this world for the children into the magical place it is meant to be, one child and one parent at a time.

VALUES:

Trust
Resilience
Communication
Rhythm
Commitment
Community/Harmony
Joy

Love & Warmth - Essentials of Waldorf Early Childhood Education

Children who live in an atmosphere of love and warmth, and who have around them truly good examples to imitate, are living in their proper element. -Rudolf Steiner

According to the *Essentials of Waldorf Early Childhood Education* love and warmth, more than any programmatic approach to early education, create the basis for development. These qualities are expressed in the gestures that live between adult and child, in the children's behavior toward one another, and also in the social relations among the adults in the early childhood center. In other words, they form the social community of early childhood education. When Rudolf Steiner visited the classes of the first Waldorf School, he was known to ask the school children, "Do you love your teacher?"

Questions we can ask ourselves as Waldorf early childhood educators include the following:

1. Are love and warmth living in the atmosphere?
2. How are they expressed in the gestures that live between adult and child?
3. How are the social relations among the adults caring for the children?
4. Are the children surrounded by a community which offers love and warmth and support?

Rhythms

Daily & Weekly Rhythms

Rhythms are one of the most important parts of a Waldorf inspired curriculum. Because the early years are a time of exploration and rapid learning where every day brings so many new things, they are also times of great uncertainty for the young child. With so many new things constantly emerging it is difficult for the young child to feel secure in the world and it is quite common that they are anxious and unsettled during this time.

Rhythms help children to anticipate what comes next, such as the time of day, the days of the week or the seasons within the year, which in turn helps them to feel confident and secure about themselves and their environment. Rhythm allows children to feel relaxed so they can focus on the task at hand and be completely present in the moment. The table below shows *Seeds of Joy Villages'* daily and weekly rhythm.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
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9:00-9:20	Cut Veggies	Cut Fruit	Bread Shaping	Cut Apples
9:30-9:55	Circle time	Circle time	Circle time	Circle time
10:00-10:30	Snack Veggies & Hummus	Snack Seasonal Fresh Fruit	Snack Bananas, Raisins & Rice Crackers	Snack Apples & Sunflower Seed Butter
10:30-11:45	Outdoor time	Outdoor time/Inside play time	Outdoor time	Outdoor time/Inside Play time
11:45-12:00	Watercolor Painting	Crayon Drawing	Outdoor	BeesWax w/ Wooden Stumps
12:00-12:15	Rest	Rest	Rest	Rest
12:15-12:35	Lunch Rice & Kale Wash & dry dishes	Lunch Millet & Veggies Wash & dry dishes	Lunch Soup & Bread Wash & dry dishes	Lunch Quinoa, Broccoli & Avocado Wash & dry dishes
12:35 - 1:00	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play
1:00 - 1:15	Story	Story	Story	Story
1:15	Goodbye together	Goodbye together	Goodbye together	Goodbye together

Physical & Social/ Emotional Development

While the activities and curriculum content may change throughout the year based on the teacher's observations of the children's needs, the basic components of the daily rhythm remains the same. A brief description of each daily component follows, giving a more concrete picture of what your child is learning, which skills he/she is mastering and just what your child is talking about when you hear, "We did it at circle time!"

Physical development is enhanced as the children move about heavy objects during play. Creative development is fostered as children plan and work out problems that arise during play.

Emotional development occurs as children express their joy, fear, anger or happiness, and experience the responses from their peers.

Social development takes place with sharing, taking turns, responding to rules at school which may differ from rules at home, and conflict resolution during play. Children make friends through dramatic play, and learn to give and take in a social group.

The lead teacher may facilitate play through indirect guidance; that is through stories, carefully planning the materials and equipment the children use during play, and through direct physical or verbal guidance.

Please postpone involvement in competitive and/or organized sports as they awaken a competitive spirit and self-consciousness in young children that is better delayed to a later stage of development.

Arrival, Signing In & the Importance of Punctuality

Our daily rhythm begins at 8:45 am. Every morning the parent/ caretaker signs in the child by noting the following information on the sign-in sheet by the classroom entrance door: the child's full name, an emergency contact number, arrival time. This is a legal requirement. Then the child enters the classroom through the front door. Make sure that the lead teacher knows that your child has arrived and do not just leave, assuming the teacher knows.

Please drop off your child as close to 8:45 am as possible. When adults have a good relationship with punctuality, the children will learn reliability and respect for others. Consistent punctuality strengthens the will of both the adult and the child. Any drop off after 9:00 am is disruptive for the entire class and interferes with the daily rhythm. If you cannot avoid being late due to traffic, for example, please make sure that you inform the lead teacher of your late arrival by sending her a text message.

Please save any questions until pick up time (unless it is something that needs immediate attention). This will allow the teacher to focus on the children. If there is something the teacher needs to be aware of, please share discreetly.

What if the Child is Sick that Morning?

If your child is ill, please text the lead teacher the day before or at the very latest that morning and cc Ms. Alethea, our board chairman, as a backup. For further details please review the *Illness Policy* section of this handbook.

Separation Anxiety

After you arrive, take a few minutes to help your child get comfortable and transition to school. For some children this is easy. Others show some signs of distress, then settle down and others get extremely upset. Please know that your child's teacher is here to support you and will work with you to discover what might work best for your child. Generally speaking, a quick goodbye eases transition anxiety while a prolonged goodbye may make the child tune in to the parent's subconscious separation anxiety and make separation more dramatic. School marks the first prolonged separation from parents and the beginning of new attachments to other adults and peers. It can be difficult for both the parent and the child. Show confidence and trust in the teacher's ability to find out what your child needs, leave him/ her with a hug and a confident smile, and assure your child that you will always come back. Please do not hesitate to contact the lead teacher with any questions.

Importance of Daily Attendance

Regular daily attendance is important for the young child as it helps to build a strong rhythm. Further, regular attendance supports your child's social development and the unity of the class. A child that skips days misses out on activities and deepening of relationships.

The child is missed within the group and usually has a much harder time adjusting to the school environment and struggles longer with separation anxieties.

Circle Time

In the morning the children come together and hold hands to form a circle. The children and the teacher sing a song or recite a verse to welcome the new day. Afterwards we all go on an imaginary journey according to the season, a festival or a story.

The rhythmic circle movements support the development of balance, body coordination, hand-eye coordination and gross motor skills. The repetition of verses, rhymes and songs lays the foundation for word association in reading and develops memory. Singing teaches rhythm, melody and harmony as well as an appreciation of music. All of circle supports cognitive, physical and social development.

Outside Time & Gross Motor Skills

Each day the children spend at least forty-five minutes to an hour outside to provide opportunity for a variety of healthy movements. Children enjoy walking, running, swinging, playing games, balancing, climbing, jumping, sand and water play, gardening and building with natural materials like branches and sticks.

Indoor Time - Free, Imaginative Play - Play is the Child's Work

"What is gained through play stems fundamentally from the self-activity of the child, through everything that cannot be determined by fixed rules. The real educational value of play lies in the fact that we ignore our rules and regulations, our educational theories, and allow the child free rein." Rudolf Steiner, Education in the Light of Anthroposophy

"The early childhood educator must school his or her observation in order to develop an artistic eye, to detect the individual quality of each child's play." (Rudolf Steiner)

The purpose of indoor play time is to give the children an opportunity to connect and explore through free, imaginative play. According to the *Essentials of Waldorf Early Childhood Education*, little children learn through play. They approach play in an entirely individual way, out of their own unique configuration of soul and spirit, and out of their own unique experiences in the world they live in. In addition, the manner in which each child plays may offer a picture of how he or she will take up his or her destiny as an adult. The task of the teacher is to create an environment that supports the possibility for healthy play. This environment includes the physical surroundings, furnishings and play materials; the social environment of activities and social interactions; and the inner/spiritual environment of thoughts, intentions and imaginations held by the adults. We may ask the following questions relating to the children's play:

1. What is the quality and duration of the children's play? Is it active, dynamic, healthy, creative? Are the children self-directed and deeply engaged, socially and individually?

2. How does the early childhood teacher reconcile these two seemingly contradictory challenges: to give free rein to the child at play, and to guide and direct and provide the conditions for healthy play to develop?
3. What are the themes and images of free play in the kindergarten?
4. Do the play materials offer diverse and open-ended possibilities for creativity, social interaction and bodily movement?

Activities

Throughout the year the children experience a variety of activities and crafts. On a weekly basis they engage in cooking, baking, sculpting, coloring or drawing with beeswax block crayons and painting with watercolor on wet paper. Using a variety of natural products and tools helps maintain their connection to the natural world as they expand their imagination, enhance their fine motor skills and cognitive development. These activities are offered in a rhythmic order and this rhythm repeats weekly.

Story

Children look forward to this special time of day. Before the teacher either just tells a story or presents it with beautifully created puppets, a candle is lit and the children say a verse or sing a song. This creates a mood of quiet reverence. The story might be a fairy tale, a folk tale, or a nature story, and often relates to the season or a festival. The teacher chooses a story based on what he/she has observed the children may need, individually or as a group. For example, if a child is leaving the teacher might choose a story that will help the children process the 'loss' and say good-bye. The same story is often told for three weeks or even a month and works on the child's soul level. After the children have watched the teacher tell and perform a story a few times, they are eager to move the puppets and tell the story themselves, and the teachers become the observers. These stories often emerge in the children's play or you may hear them being retold or played out at home. Many things are learned from story time. The children learn to observe, to put thoughts into words, to be patient, to collaborate, to remember etc.

Please note, it is best not to ask the children to retell the story or what they have done in school today. Just allow the story to work within the child and give them the freedom to share with you in his/her own time what they are willing and ready to share.

Nutrition — Mostly Organic, Vegan, Vegetarian, Nut, and Dairy Free Menus

Nurturing our bodies as well as our minds and spirits is important at *Seeds of Joy Village*. Meals and snacks eaten at school provide additional opportunities to acknowledge our appreciation for the natural world. Snacks are prepared with mostly organic, whole food ingredients and encourage reverence for a healthy body and a healthy earth.

Snack and Lunch

Every day two meals are provided - snack and lunch. All meals are freshly prepared in our school's kitchen with the most healthy, nutritious and wholesome, mostly organic ingredients. Since many children have allergic reactions to dairy and/or nuts, our classroom/ kitchen is a nut and dairy-free zone. Instead we provide beautifully arranged fresh, seasonal fruits or oatmeal, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, raisins or goji berries as part of the breakfast snack.

Lunch usually consists of a healthy whole grain and lightly seasoned vegetables (prepared with coconut or olive oil). Wednesday is our soup and bread day. The children help cut the vegetables and make the bread dough. Water or tea is served with every meal.

The lead teacher puts the menus together. Usually the menu changes slightly with the season. The daily menu remains the same every day of the week, so the children can predict the days of the week by the meal that is being served. For example, they know that Wednesdays is soup and bread day. Parents will receive an email whenever there is a menu change, so they have an opportunity to report possible allergy issues.

It is amazing to see that in the beginning of the school year, children think they don't like what is being served, but before long many ask for second helpings!

The menus are posted on the kitchen cupboard.

Mealtimes are approached in a mood of reverence. The table is nicely set with placemats, napkins, spoons, bowls and fresh flowers. This creates an atmosphere conducive to good table manners, conversation and the desire of remaining at the table until excused. A verse is said to bless the meal and a candle is lit. The children help set the table, clean up after themselves and wash and dry the dishes after lunch.

Important! Refer to the Allergies, Epipen & Dietary Concerns section for our policy.

How Can I Support A Healthy Eating Lifestyle At Home?

Families are encouraged to support a healthy eating philosophy at home by following these guidelines:

- Use healthy, whole food ingredients, fruits and vegetables (preferably organic) and as little processed sugar and prepackaged food as possible.
- No gum, candy, soda, juices etc. please.
- Avoid hydrogenated oils, preservatives & dyes, corn syrup, fast food

Please make sure that your child does not come to school on an empty stomach.

To support healthy eating habits at home, we have included a link below to inspire you to create healthy meals for your child outside of school as well.

Nut-free, healthy meal plans & ideas for at home, cutting out processed foods	www.100DaysToRealFood.com
Good Articles	www.raisingkidsraw.com

End of Day Dismissal & Sign-Out

Your child eagerly looks forward to seeing you, and it gives him/her a sense of security when you are on time at the end of the school day. Unless you have made prior arrangements with the lead teacher upon drop off or via text, please pick up your child no later than 1:15 pm unless after care has been arranged. Children are officially released at 1:15 pm. If you pick up your child later than 1:15 pm, please make arrangements with the lead teacher or another parent. The teacher will dismiss your child at the **front door** once she sees you and has made eye contact with you. Please remember to sign out your child legibly. This releases the school from further supervision responsibilities.

If someone else is picking up your child, please make sure to let the lead teacher and your child know prior to drop off. Any adult (parent, relative, friend or other parent from school) what is picking up your child must be on the emergency card/ child's release form. If it is the first time this person is picking up, adequate identification is required.

If you are late and would like another parent to supervise your child until you arrive, make sure to text the teacher your estimated arrival time and what parent you would like to sign out and supervise your child (he/she must be on the emergency/ release form). Otherwise, the child will not be released and stay in the classroom with the teacher until you arrive.

Late Pickup

If you have not arranged after care and you are late (1:15 pm and thereafter) and have not contacted the teacher, the teacher will try to call you. If you or your emergency contact does not respond, the Redondo Beach police department will be notified. Please note that the teacher is not allowed to drive children in her car.

Moving Out of Storage - Setting Up the Classroom

Seeds of Joy Village is located in Redondo Beach Wilderness Park and has special permission to use the Park's classroom space which is managed by the City of Redondo Beach. During the summer months, the city uses this space for their own summer programs, so the entire classroom is disassembled and moved into a POD storage container. After the summer, all the furniture is moved back out of storage container and into the classroom. Teacher and parents set up the classroom once again. All parents, new and returning, are expected to help. A link to an online sign-up sheet and move-in instructions will be emailed to all parents about a week prior to school begins.

This year, on **Saturday, August 24th, 2019 at 9:00 am**, about six parents are needed to move the furniture and boxes from the onsite POD container back into the classroom. From **Sept 1st-6th**, another group of parents will help the teacher unpack the boxes and set up the classroom. This is a wonderful time to get to know your teacher. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Alethea, our president or Ms, Tracie, our enrollment coordinator. Thanks in advance for making yourself available!

Preparing for the First Day of School

Importance of Sleep

Young, growing children need a good 12 hours of uninterrupted sleep every night. Please create a bedtime rhythm at home. It is best if your child goes to bed around the same time every day (for example 7pm to 7am/ 7:30pm at the latest). Having a consistent bedtime ritual (one story or one song) allows you to have a special moment of bonding and helps to get young children to bed on time, feeling secure. Bathing, putting on pajamas, teeth brushing etc. are part of the pre-bedtime routine.

It is highly advisable to allow young children to sleep in an environment that is as quiet as possible, so they can enter deep sleep. Please refrain from running dishwashers, dryers or washing machines or playing loud music after bedtime.

Meet & Greet Visit - Member Orientation Meeting

Prior to the first day of school a *Membership Meeting/Parent Orientation* will be held on **Friday, September 6th, 2019** at the *Seeds of Joy Village* classroom in the Redondo Beach Wilderness Park at **6:00 pm**. Here you will have a chance to meet other parents, meet the teacher, turn in your grounds fee, enrollment paperwork and ask any last minute questions you may have. You and your child will see the indoor classroom and outdoor play area, and place a change of clothes and indoor shoes in their assigned cubbies. Each cubbie will have a symbol. On the side of the shelf with the cubbies will be a list that shows your child's name and symbol. Please place all items neatly and with care in your child's cubby.

Please remember to also bring your child's earthquake kit (see *Clothing Guideline and Earthquake Kit* for details).

Field Trips

In October our preschool class goes on a field trip to *Tanaka Farms* (www.TanakaFarms.com) at 5380 ¾ University Drive in Irvine (we might go to a different farm instead this year. If you know of a great organic farm, please let Ms. Alethea know). The children pick pumpkins and vegetables, go on a wagon ride around the 30 acre farm, visit the petting zoo with goats, sheep and alpaca, walk through the corn maze and have a communal snack. Parents drive their own child and Ms. Alethea meets them at the entrance of the farm. Everyone departs together after a communal picnic style lunch which is provided by the parents.

The cost of this field trip is around \$18 per person (children under 2 are free). However, no child will be excluded from a field trip for lack of funds. Any additional field trips the lead teacher might suggest will be paid for by each parent.

Seasonal Celebrations & Other Festivals

Festivals play another important role in our curriculum and community. They mark and celebrate the changing of the seasons and the cycles within our natural world. Planning and preparing festivals together to share and enjoy special moments and milestones strengthens connections and builds community.

Merriam Webster defines reverence as: *honor or respect felt or shown*. How better to show that honor and respect for our families, community and the world around us than by being truly present in these special moments. We provide the most meaningful authentic image of reverence for our children to imitate. The planning of seasonal celebrations & other festivals is done under the guidance of the lead teacher. The following festivals are celebrated at *Seeds of Joy Village*:

Michaelmas (for the children only)

Again and again teachers observe the need for the archetype of the hero who conquers evil and darkness, and of the knight who is brave



and true. Archangel Michael is the greatest of all the archangels and is honored for defeating Lucifer in the war in heaven. He wields his sword of light against fear and darkness brought on by the dragon. His action inspires us to face the inner and outer darkness with courage and strength of will and to embrace challenges without fear. As the children learn about St. Michael they feel empowered to find their own courage to confront inner and outer dragons with strength and courage and work to make the world a better place.

During Michaelmas we also look beyond our own needs and become more sensitive to what others and even the world needs. The world is full of dragons who spread hatred and fear, doubt and destruction, but St. Michael teaches us that these dragons also present opportunities. The dragon that terrorizes the kingdom is tamed, not slain. He is led into service, and his strength is used for the good.

Michaelmas falls near the equinox and is therefore associated with the beginning of autumn. In class we talk about how the days are now getting shorter and the nights longer and that it might soon be a little darker outside on the way to school.

About a week before Michaelmas the teacher and the children create a dye from marigolds and turmeric, dip white silks into the dye and watch them turn into a lovely golden yellow. Next the silks are transformed into capes and the children hang them up to dry. It is lovely to see the sun shine through the silks and watch the children run through them with great delight.

The children also spend much time sanding wooden swords, then painting them a beautiful gold with watercolor and dry them overnight. The swords are kept in a special place (f.ex. the nature table) until Michaelmas.

On the day of Michaelmas we enjoy making dragon bread and share some with the park ranger on duty who usually enjoys the bread very much. The children also sand the swords with the finest sandpaper and polish them with oil.

At the end of our Michaelmas celebration day, each child receives his/her cape of light and the word with the following words: "May this cape of light give you courage and strength. You have polished your sword so strong, so bright. Use it only for the right".

Magical Halloween - Fall Festival (Fundraiser)

This festival starts around twilight and takes place at the Wilderness Park. Every year families are looking forward to this event and its success depends on how well everyone collaborates. Parents learn to work together as a community under the guidance of the lead teacher/director. All preschool/kindergarten as well as parent/toddler parents are invited to participate to whatever degree they feel comfortable. It is a chance to get to know each other better by creating magic together.

Headed by the lead teacher and our enrolled students, current and prior families of *Seeds of Joy Village*, equipped with little baskets, walk along a path lit with pumpkins. This path leads through an enchanted forest with magical spots parents have set up where fairytale

figures, mermaids, gnomes, magicians and fairies come alive and give away small, precious gift - seashells, special poems, apples, stars....

The path ends in our gnome hollow (where the children play in preschool) where parents have set up a few hay bails and tables with healthy treats. The children and guests can buy food and drinks. While everyone enjoys the food a magician will do a few magic tricks. The children can dip apples into caramel and take it home. We enjoy each others' company, then clean up and go home.

Scary costumes are not allowed. Costumes should be self-made (no Disney characters, etc.).

Lantern Walk (Martinmas/ St. Martin)

On Martinmas eve the children bring the beautiful lanterns they have made in class as a symbol for their own individual light. They gather with their parents in front of the park's gate and then take a walk through the park together, proudly carrying their lit lanterns and singing songs as the teachers lead the way. We recognize 'the light' of one another and experience wonderful moments of caring and sharing. On their way they encounter St. Martin and witness him give away part of his cloak to a poor beggar to keep him warm.

Thanksgiving (optional)

This night the families of *Seeds of Joy Village* - preschool and parent-toddler - join together as a community to rejoice in the fall festivities. The night is potluck style and the room is especially decorated for this beautiful evening together.

St. Nicholas (for the children only)

On December 6th, the children anxiously await St. Nicholas who arrives with his *Golden Book of Good Deeds* in which he recorded all the wonderful things he has seen the children do and a few that he feels they need to work on. The day before the children polish and clean their boots, hoping that he will fill them with an apple or an orange and other special things like honey sticks, a chocolate Nicholas and golden chocolate coins. They also set up a table with cookies and milk for him.

St. Nicholas hands out small peg doll nicholas' the parents have made beforehand in collaboration with the teacher during their in-class participation time. Each peg doll is unique and has its own personality.

Saint Nicholas is an archetypal figure of heavenly wisdom. He also stands for the joy of giving. He is celebrated in many countries around the world. To learn the importance of giving, and to experience that giving gives even greater joy than receiving, the children are asked to look through their toys and see which ones they are willing to give up and donate to other children who do not have toys. These toys are collected in a basket that is placed in front of the classroom and a volunteer parent drops them off at the Childrens' Hospital or another place in need of toys. It is heartwarming to see how big the childrens' hearts have grown at this point. Some have given up their most beloved toys and even parents have had a hard time letting go.

Each Saint who is celebrated in a Waldorf environment brings special qualities to the children, qualities worth imitating.

Advent/ Winter Spiral

As the sun retreats and the winter days grow colder our community comes together to walk the winter spiral. The room is darkened to symbolize that nature undergoes the darkest time of the year. Everybody sits quietly on their chairs and watches the teacher light the center candle while beautiful live music is being played in the background. First each child walks down the spiral path and lights his/her candle from the main candle in the center of the spiral. This walk towards the center light represents the balance between the darkness we all feel during the depth of winter and the expectancy of the return of the light in spring. Once the candle is lit, the child walks back out of the spiral and chooses a safe place to set down the light along the way, then sits down in his/her seat again. With every candle that is lit, the room glows a little brighter until the entire space is lit up. The parents walk the spirals after the children are done. Very small children will walk together with one parent. This is a very festive event and parents, children and teachers come dressed in nice clothes. After all candles are safely extinguished, we all enjoy a variety of homemade cookies and hot drinks before we clean up together and go home.

Please no loose hair or flowy or puffy skirts which might catch fire.

To prepare for this event parents participate by gathering free needle branches trimmings from the various christmas tree lots and small tree trunks and drop them off in the school's garden. One parent volunteer will cut the small tree trunks, carve a hole in its center and return them to the teacher who will then turn them into festive arrangements.

Easter

This special event allows us to welcome spring and enjoy the time around us. The children spend time beforehand making special crafts and take home small gifts.

May Faire/ Basket Social

Once winter gives way to spring and the flowers begin to bloom, our *Seeds of Joy Village* family celebrates its MayFaire/ Basket Social which takes place in the Redondo Beach Wilderness Park.

This is the school's biggest fundraising event and everyone's help is needed to make it a success. Each parent puts together a unique basket or will ask local businesses to donate a service, a basket or anything else. We have a list of businesses that have donated wonderful items in the past. Each parent will call at least three names on the list or approach a new business to share a service or product they like. In turn the businesses get exposure to our community, can use this as a tax write-off and are identified by an attached business card. All baskets and services are nicely displayed and auctioned off the day of the basket social and the earnings are used to purchase whatever the school might need.

A maypole is set up in the park and the children dance around the maypole after they create festive wreaths from fresh flowers (which one or two parents will pick up from the flower market in downtown Los Angeles for free or collect from Whole Foods or other flower shops) and braided garlands.

Parents prepare a dish or barbeque and bake healthy cookies for our community potluck. Parents will also set up about six simple games for the children. The lead teacher will guide

and oversee the event together with parents who have been part of *Seeds of Joy* for a while.

Please refer to the school calendar for all dates and times. Other celebrations like Michaelmas, St. Nicholas, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day are celebrated in the classroom with the children only.

A clarification note from our last faire from Ms. Shweta: "For those of you who might wonder why the May Faire is not planned out in all detail, I would like to explain that Waldorf Fairies are not about the end results. They are meant to be an experience, an experience of coming together individually and in groups under the guidance of the teacher/director. The teacher/ director in our school's case creates the overall framework and within this framework he/she leaves much room for creative expression and small group collaborations. First and foremost, the preparations should be done with joy. They should not be stressful. It is very different from corporate event planning where it is all about perfection, the bottom line, detailed instructions etc. This is about coming together magically and creatively as a family as each one is contributing what they can with joy, excitement and love. No one knows the outcome. The Faire will be as big or as small as we contribute, but done in this spirit, it will always come together magically.

Cross-Cultural Celebrations

At *Seeds of Joy Village* many families from different countries and cultural backgrounds come together. If your family celebrates a special festival that you would like to share with our community, please discuss it with the lead teacher at least a month prior to the festival date and the teacher will do her best to see if and how this festival can be incorporated. Learning about different cultures at an early age and fostering cross-cultural understanding is an important part of our curriculum. In the past the children have celebrated many wonderful events in the classroom such as the Japanese Children's Festival and the Japanese Doll Festival. We have also honored our Hispanic students by making pupusas. We look forward to including many more.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very special celebrations at *Seeds of Joy, Inc.* and the children look forward to them. The lead teacher will try to schedule your child's birthday as close to his/her actual birthday as possible. She will contact you via email or text to determine the exact date of your child's birthday celebration in class. Parents bring their child's favorite fruit (in season) along with whipped coconut cream and a homemade birthday cake based on our school's recipe which the teacher will provide. Anyone who plays an important role in your child's life is invited to attend the birthday celebration.

To preserve the reverence for the celebration and allow all to 'live in the moment', we ask that no recording devices be used during the event. You may take a few group shots at the end of the celebration. Our birthday celebrations start at 10:40 a.m. and last about two hours. Please be on time, knock and wait outside until you are asked to come in. Quietly take your seat. After the celebration your child can either stay in school or go home with you.

Packing Up & Moving To Storage

Packing - Park Day

Seeds of Joy Village has the privilege to use the building in the Redondo Beach Wilderness Park as classroom space. During the summer the City needs the space for its various summer programs. Therefore our classroom must be disassembled every summer. All furniture, kitchen items and toys have to be moved to a storage facility. Parents drop off about 24 medium and large size boxes (12 for the kitchen area, 12 for the classroom area as well as bubble wrap and tape.

The lead teacher spends the day with the children in the park while the classroom aid prepares snack and lunch in the classroom. Snack and lunch are outside. The children enjoy free play in the park. The lead teacher may do circle, a craft or take them on a hike. On this day, four parents sign up to help pack from 9 am- 1:00 pm. All boxes are labeled. Kitchen items are labeled with 'kitchen' and a 'fat green dot' (block crayons will be in the kitchen) and state what is in the box. For example: Plates and cups; pots and pans; spices, oil etc.; cleaning supplies; towels...you get the idea. All fragile items are wrapped in bubble wrap. Last year many items were broken as they were not wrapped. Any further packing and moving instructions will be emailed to the parents about a week before the beginning of the move. Once again, the children have a chance to learn through observation. They learn how quickly and joyfully a task can be accomplished when done together.

Packing - Pajama Day

Just like the day before, the lead teacher spends the day with the children in the park and the children enjoy free play or go on a hike while the teacher's assistant prepares snack and lunch in the classroom. Snack and lunch will be outdoors. This is our pajama day. Teacher, classroom aide, the children and even the parents are encouraged to come in their pajamas. Two parents sign up to help pack, one for the shift from 9:00-1:15.

On this day, the last Thursday of the school year, parents pick up their child's emergency kits and empty their child's cubby at pick-up.

Last Day of School - Packing - Beach Day

On the last day of school, both, teacher and classroom aide spend they day with the children at the beach so the parents can finish packing up. The children do not go into the water. One or two parents bring a kite, a large blanket to sit on and a canopy for shade. The children build sand castles and take turns in flying the kite. Each parent drives their own child to the designated beach area. Drop off is 9:00 a.m. The location is: ***Miramar Park (Torrance Beach)***, 201 Paseo De La Playa, Redondo Beach, CA 90277 (by the dolphin statue. Go down the stairs. You will see us close to the restroom building.) We share a snack and a light lunch. Parents bring one cut-up fruit and a light lunch item to share with everyone (potluck style) as well as water for all. Pick up time from the beach is 1:15 p.m. While the teacher, the classroom aid and the children are at the beach, 4 parents finish packing boxes at the classroom starting at 9:00 am and ending around 1:00 pm.

Move-out — POD Container (On a Saturday)

On this day about 6 strong parents gather at the classroom around 9 am for about four hours to help load the packed boxes, closets, play unit and shelves out of the classroom and into the POD container that gets dropped off on-site the day before.

The empty room is cleaned. A sign-up sheet will be on the stand with the sign-in sheet. Yes, this sounds like a lot of work but it really is not. Working together is a nice time to bond, talk and have fun. It shows us how much we can accomplish by working together as a team. Thank you parents for all you do!

SOJV Guidelines & Policies

Parent-Teacher Communication

Parent-Teacher communication is essential to a successful school experience for everyone. Appointments can be made with the teacher directly by texting (preferred) or emailing her. Please note that teachers will not discuss lengthy concerns or questions regarding children via email. These deserve full attention and thoughtful conversation.

Otherwise, general school communication will be conducted via email; this includes general reminders, event notifications and newsletters. You are always welcome to ask a question or share an observation with your lead teacher at pick-up once the children are in safe hands.

Parent Teacher Conferences

There are two parent/teacher conferences, one in January and one in May. They are held in the school's classroom and last about 15 minutes. This is an opportunity for parents and the lead teacher to meet and discuss your child's class experience and share observations, impressions, questions and goals to deepen our shared understanding of your child, as well as strengthen our work together. We are always grateful for communication from you about significant changes or circumstances in your child's life. You do not need to wait until it is conference time to discuss your child. Please make an appointment with your lead teacher any time it is needed.

These conferences are for parents only. Parents will be able to sign up for a time slot in advance. Parent conferences also provide an opportunity to learn more about Waldorf education while strengthening our community of parents and teachers. It is essential that at least one parent (and preferably both) attend.

Parent Education Evenings (2)

During these evenings the teacher shares greater knowledge about the Waldorf philosophy. The teacher may also get parents involved in experiencing the Waldorf education on a practical level (f.ex. the parents become the children and do 'circle time') or the teacher may plan a special event as a reward for all the helping hands. Parent Education Evenings often include a 'council' session which gives each parent a moment to share feelings and

observations without being interrupted. It also teaches us to listen with our full attention and open our hearts. This is a time of community and fellowship.

Cell Phone Free Zone

In alignment with our shared core value of providing a media free environment, please refrain from using cell phones at drop-off, pick-up or while you are working as an adult volunteer in or outside of the classroom/ kitchen (no texting or responding to emails unless it is an emergency). The teachers are permitted to carry their cell phones, so they can be reached in an emergency or make an important phone call.

Allergies, EpiPen & Dietary Concerns

If your child has a medical allergy or food sensitivity please inform the lead teacher and board president upon enrollment.

A medical allergy requires a medical clearance form provided upon enrollment. If the child requires medication (for example, epi pen), the medication must be on school property at all times with a doctor's prescription and dosage requirements. The medication must be clearly labeled with your child's name.

If your child is allergic to certain foods that we serve (see snack/lunch - our menu section of this manual) such as gluten, you may provide an alternative after getting the go ahead from the lead teacher and president. In that case the extra treat needs to be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Please fill out and return the Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan Form that is part of your welcome package and return it to our office with your enrollment paperwork.

No outside food is brought into the classroom.

Clothing Guidelines

Seeds of Joy Village is a place of active work and play, indoors as well as outdoors, rain or shine. Therefore it is essential that your child comes to school dressed appropriately for the weather/season. The best outfit includes a pair of leggings or long pants to minimize getting scratched while climbing. Skirts are allowed with leggings underneath.

At *Seeds of Joy Village* we also strive to provide an environment free of media influences. This helps the children to freely self-select their play themes, so please send your child to school in clothing free of slogans, cartoons and caricatures. Likewise, camouflage, cowboy boots and baseball caps are best left at home.

Please bring the following **change of clothes to the Member/Parent Orientation Meeting**: two pairs of socks, two pairs of underwear, one t-shirt with long sleeves, one with short sleeves, a warm jacket, a raincoat, a winter/sun hat with a strap, two pairs of pants/shorts, a pair of indoor shoes with a soft (leather) sole, preferably made of a natural material such as wool or felt. *Please check and re-organize your child's cubby at least once a week.*

All toys are best left at home. If a toy is lost or broken, it can be very upsetting to the child. Jewelry, make-up, nail polish and tattoos should stay at home.

Earthquake Kit

Your child's earthquake kit must be complete **before** he/ she may attend the program. Please place all items in a gallon-size ziploc bag with first and last names clearly marked and bring it to the **Member/Parent Orientation Meeting**. Earthquake kits are stored on-site. Please include the following items in the earthquake kit:

- Emergency Info Form (LIC700)
- A change of clothes including a long sleeved shirt and pants
- Two (2) pairs of socks
- Two (2) pairs of underwear
- A pair of shoes
- Photo(s) of family/people who are important to child
- Comforting note from parents (to be read to child)
- Optional – small special toy or comfort item
- Optional – additional *nut free* non-perishable snack(s)

Seeds of Joy Village provides:

- Bag
- 3 day supply of food
- 3 day supply of water
- Emergency blanket
- Kleenex
- 12 hour light stick

Television and Media

Most parents are drawn to our program because of our unique pedagogy, philosophy and values. *Seeds of Joy Village philosophy* is based on an understanding of the various stages of child development. While television and other media may serve as a source of information and entertainment for adults, external, artificial, fast moving images inhibit the inner picture-making ability in a young child and therefore interfere with the development of a child's imagination and thinking process.

There is plenty of evidence supported by recent research (f. ex. from the *American Academy of Pediatrics*) that shows that exposure to electronic media and swiftness of images for young children have an adverse effect on the healthy development of the child and result in learning and behavioral disorders, sleep disturbances and physiological damage. It may also have a detrimental effect on self image, the ability to concentrate, sit still, the ability to build relationships, influence values, interfere with the development of reading and physical skills, energy levels (children that are frequently exposed to media often look lethargic, passive and tired, have a hard time engaging in play and show addictive tendencies), psychological health, creativity and social behavior.

Seeds of Joy Village encourages and expects families to respect our media free philosophy and significantly reduce or best eliminate all media use (television, videos, video games, computer games, phone apps, Ipods, CD players, radio, movies, etc.) for their children. We

realize that this request might feel like a tall order. However, families may find that more free time means more creative and quality time together. Here are a few more points you might observe in your or other children that might help you change your mind:

- The over-stimulating influence of media upon young children is visible in many ways. The child may speak in the tone of a certain character or machine where speech can be reduced to the sound of robots or mechanical noises.
- The child may seem ‘stuck’ in creative play, unable to play anything but a superhero or transformer.
- The child might have poor imagination and can’t ‘think’ of anything to play (not even house) and is always bored and in need outside adult stimulation.
- The child cannot sit still during story time, making it a distressing time instead of a time of wonderment and delight.

Developing the child’s capacity to imagine, create and hold an inner picture in their mind when hearing a story is the cornerstone of Waldorf education. This inner picture-making capacity is a prerequisite to a child’s academic development. It takes more effort to generate ones own images than to bring up external, artificial images offered by media. For example, the image of Batman will always override the self-generated image of a character in a beautiful fairytale because media images are so powerful as they are developed by experts.

According to *Beginning and Beyond, Foundations in Early Childhood Education*, the 1998 Nielson Report on Television exposure to media at a young age “promotes passivity, slowing intellect and stifling imagination.”

Seeds of Joy Village is committed to nurturing, protecting and providing young children with a learning environment that enables them to be creative, imaginative and free thinking individuals. Therefore we kindly ask for your support and partnership in this endeavor.

Let childhood be a time of wonder, of exploration, of learning through being physically active, of exploring nature, of growing socially, playing creatively and imaginatively, of singing, talking, running, laughing, and even crying.

Food for Thought (see the links below & search for children & tv or video game exposure)

Early television exposure and subsequent attention problems in children	http://www.pediatrics.appublications.org
American Academy of Pediatrics	www.healthychildren.org
Click on the link on the right, in the search field type in video games	www.psychologytoday.com

Illness Policy

Control of communicable illness among the children is an important responsibility. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illness have been developed with the

help of information from the health department and local pediatricians. To protect the group as well as your own child, please be considerate and keep sick children at home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

- A fever over 100 F (37.8 C) orally
- Signs of a newly developing cold such as deep, uncontrollable and persistent coughing
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or an upset stomach
- Unusual or unexpected loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache
- Any colored, non-clear discharge or drainage from eyes, nose, ears, or open sores
- A contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, measles, impetigo, conjunctivitis, lice, pinworms etc.
- If they are not feeling well enough to fully participate in activities at school

Children who show any of these symptoms will be returned home. We appreciate your cooperation.

After an illness, children often appear healthy in the morning, but are still not up to the vigorous, lively school activities. Please allow your child at least one full day of rest after an illness. A child should remain home for at least 24 hours after they are free of vomiting or fever without the use of fever-reducing medications (like acetaminophen or ibuprofen). If your child is ill or will be absent for any other reason, please notify the lead teacher via text (818.518.5293) and Ms. Alethea.

Discipline: Firm, Consistent, Loving & Compassionate Limits

A teacher is like a conductor of an orchestra. Sometimes the mood is grave, sometimes gay. The instruments have to be tuned and everyone has to play together harmoniously so beautiful music can be the result. In the same way the teacher creates an environment where the different characters and temperaments come together and learn to appreciate each other so they may grow and prosper, individually and in community.

Establishing Unity in the Classroom

One of the greatest challenges for a teacher is to establish unity in the classroom when a new class is formed. This unity is developed in many ways. The children must learn to appreciate one another and come to understand one another's gifts and shortcomings. If children can be led to a sympathetic interest in one another's weaknesses and a desire to help, the teacher will find them to be powerful allies.

Good habits must be established. Just as certain courtesies in social life are helpful in our interactions, so certain habits of conduct are desirable in a classroom. The more orderly the arrangements are for break-time and lunch, for transitions like putting on outside shoes, the more smoothly the daily life in the classroom will be.

It is also important that the parents and teachers collaborate in keeping the classroom beautiful. Children are very ready to take pride in their classroom if their teachers set firm and consistent examples by showing that cleaning up after play or a meal, for example, is an important part of being together.

Parents need to trust that the teacher has a valuable gift to bring and will create a program in which the children can unfold their unique gifts.

Source: Discipline in a Rudolf Steiner School by Eileen Hutchins published in 'Child and Man'. www.RudolfSteinerSchool.org

Conflict Situations - Breakdowns In Trust and Connection

Child natural trust in the world and people as the basis for imitation, and a need for a secure sense of the world as a good place. Conflict situations are breakdowns in trust and connection. Resolving conflicts needs to be a restoration of essential trust and connection thereby allowing the child to resume his dream-like exploration of the natural and social worlds. The best technique when adult intervention is necessary is to use words that you would be happy if the children had said themselves, and if they took up those phrases through imitation. Phrases should be given that are direct, non-blaming, true and succinct so that in future situations, those phrases are the tools in their social tool box. When those phrases become habits, you have succeeded.

When the adult is active in the use of verbal tools worthy of imitation and practices compassion for the one hurt, the children develop communication tools for their social life, and conflicts are resolved more easily. The children begin to imitate a non-blaming way of resolving their own conflicts and more peace descends into their lives, into the kindergarten and the world. These seeds planted in early childhood bear fruit later as capacities for checking in with one's own needs and the needs of the other, and finding solutions where the needs of both can be met. *Source: Connecting with Young Children: Educating the Will by Stephen Spitalny*

There are various methods a teacher might use to help a child learn boundaries or solve conflicts. Just a few of these methods are listed below:

Redirection

Example: if a child is throwing rocks, the teacher might say, "I can see you enjoy throwing but rocks belong on the ground, so let's go find a ball."

Setting Firm Boundaries and Sticking to them

Teaching children strict boundaries is important for the safety of the individual children and the class as a whole. Young children are living in their will. They might hit, kick and bite. Learning to channel this energy into more productive behavior is a challenging part of teaching. Sometimes, if the child is 'out of control', it might be necessary for the teacher to hold that child at arm's length and ask it to take a deep breath until the child calms down.

Asking What Happened and What can be Done to Make Things Right (Unitive Approach)

The teacher might walk up to the children who are having a conflict, and, preferably with no probing, questioning or siding with one or the other child ask neutrally, "What happened?" Then she will give each child a chance to express his/her feelings and describe what happened from their perspective while listening attentively. Instead of offering a solution, the teacher might then simply restate the problem and say, "Hm, and now what can we do?" Again she supports the children in coming up with some ideas to solve the problem themselves. If the children don't have any suggestions (which rarely happens), she might offer one and see if they like it and start acting excited and happy about it. She might end by saying, "See, we are all friends here and friends can always find a solution." After a while the children will often repeat these short sentences and they become the classroom's

mantras. The next time there is a similar conflict, the children often remind each other of the rightful behavior by repeating the mantra themselves.

The teacher stays close by, observes and offers suggestions only when necessary.

Non-Violent Communication

Non-violent communication means compassionate, authentic and courageous communication. It focuses our attention on needs, values and yearnings that each and every one of us human beings share - needs such as honesty, peace, care, support, the need to contribute, to be included etc. All feelings arise from needs. If our needs are met, we experience pleasant feelings. If our needs remain unmet, we experience unpleasant feelings (for example, if I feel that others care for me I may feel relaxed, content and happy. Otherwise I may feel anxious, hurt, sad or annoyed).

Stating Facts instead of Blaming

"Susie is sad. What can we do to help her?"

Instead of "Don't slam the door. It's too loud," try "We close the door gently."

"Hands are for work and play and taking care of others," while gently stroking the hand that has hit.

"Sticks are not for poking. This stick needs a rest now."

It is important to keep in mind that young children are not naughty or bad. Their actions are not good or bad, or wrong. They are adventurers and explorers searching for their way in the physical and social world. They are looking for strategies that are successful in attaining their goals. Stephen Spitalny

Reasons for Dismissal from SOJV

Seeds of Joy Village reserves the right to dismiss a child or family if the teacher, with the consent of the board, deems it necessary for the welfare of the child or the school/class because the child or the parent's behavior demonstrates a lack of believe or disrespect of SOJV's mission. In addition, children may be dismissed if the family is more than 10 days late in paying tuition, or if the lead teacher and the board determine that the child presents a health and safety issue. In this case dues will be prorated through the date of dismissal. Any further obligation to the agreement will become null and void as of the date of dismissal.

Membership & Operation

Seeds of Joy Village, a Parent Participation, Non-Profit Corporation

Seeds of Joy Village is a non-profit, license-exempt, parent-participation program where parents (members) work under the guidance and in collaboration with our lead teacher/director, a graduate of the Waldorf Institute of Southern California (WISC) and the Board of Directors. The teacher/director serves as the guardian of our Waldorf-Inspired Program.

License-Exempt - What does it Mean?

Seeds of Joy Village is license-exempt. License-exempt centers operate legally under the supervision of parents and is exempt of most licensing standards. Parent participation programs, in which parents share responsibility for child care, often tend to be license exempt. A parent-participation or co-op is license exempt only if it meets the following conditions:

- Parents/ Caregivers do not receive payment for services
- Parents rotate responsibility for care of all the children equally among themselves
- Every caregiver is a parent, legal guardian or adult relative of at least one child in the co-op and
- No more than 12 children are cared for at any given time by any provider/ parent.

License exempt child care arrangements are exempt from licensing by the *Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division*.

How is Parent Participation Practiced at SOJV?

Parent participation at SOJV means being part of a community of parents who help care for their children by working in the classroom (mostly by helping in the kitchen) and taking on other responsibilities like Grocery and Tidy Gnome chores, and preparing festivals on a rotating basis. While they are in the classroom/kitchen, they must be willing to learn through observation (by watching how the lead teacher interacts with the children). It is a privilege to be in the classroom and to learn through observation and practical application rather than by just reading parenting books. In-class parents must treat all children equally and may not favor or focus on their own child. An in-class parent does not teach nor does he/she interfere with the teacher or help resolve conflicts. He/she does not 'discipline' children or get involved in lengthy conversations with the children. An in-class parent must also understand that the children observe his/her actions and must therefore act worthy of imitation. The in-class parent must also be strong enough to treat and care for all children equally.

It also means that parents continue to educate themselves and participate in *Parent Education Evening* meetings. We highly recommend that all parents in our program listen to the CD series "How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk."

In addition the teacher might ask a parent who she feels is most qualified or supportive to help with specific tasks, festival preparations, or repairs to keep the classroom or outside area in good condition. Your involvement will be a rewarding experience for everyone.

In addition the teacher might ask a parent who she feels is most qualified or supportive to help with specific tasks, festival preparations, or repairs to keep the classroom or outside area in good condition. Your involvement will be a rewarding experience for everyone.

In summary, SOJV's Parent Participation Program is,

1. employs a program teacher
2. a place where parents help in the classroom/kitchen on a rotating basis
3. a place where parents learn through observation (instead of learning by reading theory, they get to watch real life scenarios and have the privilege to observe the teacher relate to the children)
4. a place where parents share information, challenges and experiences about raising with other like-minded people

As a parent participation program, all parents must participate in the classroom on a rotating basis.

What is a "Non-Profit"?

"Non-profits" are corporations that make a difference in their community. They can be large organization, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters or Make-a-Wish, or a local animal shelter or community theatre. These are groups that are tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) as "public charities" because they are formed to provide "public benefit.

Source: What is a non-profit section of the National Council of Nonprofits website which can be found at www.councilofnonprofits.org/what-is-a-nonprofit

Bylaws, a Nonprofit's Roadmap

Bylaws set out the overall structure and basic rules for operating the corporation, including how directors and officers are elected and how the governing board operates. These rules are limited by California laws and are very important to the governance of the corporation.

Source: California Attorney General's Guide for Charities, which can be found at http://www.ag.ca.gov/charities/publications/guide_for_charities.pdf

Seeds of Joy Village's Bylaws

Insight into a complete copy of *Seeds of Joy Village, Inc.*'s bylaws can be requested from the board president at any time. These bylaws were approved July 29, 2008. Below are some "highlights".

Name, Purpose

The name of the organization shall be *Seeds of Joy Village*. This corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, scientific and educational purposes, more specifically to nurture joy and intelligence, connected by the wonder of humanity and exemplifying peace in very action.

Board of Directors - The Role of the Board, Size & Eligibility

The Board is responsible for overall policy and direction of the council, and delegates responsibility for day-to-day operations to the council director and committees. The Board shall have up to thirteen and not fewer than four members. The board receives no compensation other than reasonable expenses. Eligibility criteria are a firm belief in the mission, a background in early childhood (either by profession or by being a parent), and a commitment to involvement.

Officers and Duties.

There shall be three officers of the Board consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary /Treasurer.

Board Meetings

The Board shall meet at least monthly at an agreed upon time and place.

Board Elections

Election of new directors or election of current directors to a second term will occur as the first item of business at the annual meeting of the corporation. Directors will be elected by a majority vote of the current directors.

Terms

According to our current bylaws, all board members shall serve one year terms, but are eligible for re-election.

Current Board of Directors

Chairman/President	Alethea Root	AletheaSOJV@gmail.com
Treasurer	Carolina Webb	CarolinaSOJV@gmail.com
Enrollment Coordinator/Secretary	Tracie Aboussleman	TracieSOJV@gmail.com

When a Board position becomes available, the Board consults with the Lead Teacher/ Director to see what members might be most qualified to join the Board and help fulfill its mission before the Board extends an invitation to a member. Important criteria are how well a person may have collaborated with the Lead Teacher and the Board throughout the year and what other expertise is needed (f.ex., a parent who has a background in finance will be a preferred candidate for the treasury position over a parent who does not have any experience in finance). Additionally, as stated in the SOJV Bylaws, "Eligibility criteria are a firm belief in the mission, a background in early childhood (either by profession or by being a parent), and a commitment to involvement."

Member Requirements and Expectations

All members of SOJV are expected to take on certain duties, as needed, as an integral part of our parent participation program. Your active and joyful participation is what makes this program flourish and helps build a strong community.

At *Seeds of Joy Village*, all members actively take turns in rotating work days in the classroom, doing laundry, grocery shopping, classroom cleaning, and festivals preparation under the guidance of the lead teacher.

Member Work/ Participation Requirement:

Parents work/participates approximately once a month for SOJV either in the classroom and as needed to support the lead teacher. The parent's in-class work day begins 15 minutes prior to school begins, at 8:45, and ends once the classroom is clean again, around 1:30.

Every parent is scheduled equally on a rotating basis. We make every effort to schedule the parents on their preferred days. An in-class parent rotation schedule will be emailed at the beginning of the new program year. In case of a scheduling conflict, please contact Ms. Alethea immediately. Thereafter, you will need to arrange with other parents on the rotation to make changes and email Ms. Alethea so that she may notate the changes on the schedule.

Note: If both parents work to make a living and therefore cannot be an in-class parent helper, that parent may trade with another parent who is willing to trade. In that case, the two parents that are switching services must inform Ms. Shweta and Ms. Alethea about the change so those schedules can be adjusted accordingly. However, such a decision is made case-by-case and must be approved by Ms. Alethea and Ms. Shweta.

All Members of SOJV share the following duties :

- Pay your monthly dues
- Attends *Seeds of Joy Village* quarterly Membership Meetings. Dates are found in the calendar.
- Parents work in class and as needed (approximately once a month on a rotating basis)
- Be the grocery and tidy gnome for the entire class (approximately once every three months, on a rotating basis)
- Participate in special events, festivals, outreaches, etc.
- Respect and follow *Seeds of Joy Village* Code of Conduct.

TB Clearance & Background Checks

It is best practice that active and regular volunteers receive a TB clearance. All members that work in the classroom must have a TB clearance form on file before they are allowed to work in the classroom. Please see the volunteer TB clearance found in your welcome package.

Regular and active volunteers, teachers, teacher's assistants, the board president, and board treasurer are required to pass background checks.

Groceries Gnome and Tidy Gnome

Parents provide one week's worth of **organic** groceries for the entire class on a rotating basis. When it is your turn to be the 'grocery and tidy gnome', the lead teacher or sometimes the classroom aid, will text you the grocery list either on Thursday after school or late Friday morning. The grocery gnome key is labeled and can be found on the right cupboard as you walk into the kitchen. Over the weekend the parent of the week drops off the groceries in the classroom's kitchen area, places all perishables neatly in the refrigerator, non-perishable fruits in the hanging basket and all other groceries into the cupboards (according to the labels). Most groceries can be found at Trader Joe's, Bristol Farms or Whole Foods. The cost for the groceries usually ranges from about \$120-\$150 (or about \$3.50 per child per meal.)

The grocery gnome parent is also the tidy gnome at the same time. He/ she picks up the classroom key on Thursday at the end of school and fills & picks up the laundry bag (if the classroom aid or in-class parent have not filled it yet). Any time after Friday 3 p.m. the tidy gnome can clean the classroom and kitchen area, and drop off the clean laundry. It is not necessary to fold, iron or put away the laundry. This task is done by the children. It is important to keep the classroom and kitchen area neat and organized. A beautiful environment makes learning fun and everyone feel at home. Deeper weekend cleaning includes:

- Mopping the kitchen, bathroom & classroom floors (the toilet and bathroom sinks are cleaned by park maintenance personnel)
- Vacuuming the carpets
- Cleaning the windows (the children love to look out of clean windows)
- Dusting and washing shelves & toys
- Cleaning the shoe cubbies
- Sanitizing the tables & chairs with our natural, non-toxic cleaners
- Cleaning & organizing, and if necessary defrosting the refrigerator
- Gently cleaning the toaster oven
- Throwing away groceries that might have gone bad
- Check to make sure trash cans are empty & clean

All cleaning products must be non-toxic and natural. They are in the kitchen/ bathroom closets and are purchased, when necessary, by the grocery gnome (only when you see them on the grocery gnome list). Brooms, mops, vacuum etc. are behind the curtain in the kitchen area.

Please remember to hang up the key where you found it once you are done and before you leave the classroom.

A Tidy Gnome sign-up list will either be emailed to you. Please pick a date & sign up. If, for some reason, you cannot make it that day, please make sure you make arrangements with another parent as early as possible to switch dates and notify the teacher. Please contact the board president or the lead teacher if you have any questions.

Billing & Payment Process

Monthly Dues

Enrollment is four days a week. Dues must be paid even if a child is absent. No discount or refunds are given.

SCHEDULE	YEARLY TUITION	MONTHLY INSTALLMENTS (10)
4 days <i>Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays</i> <i>Thursdays</i>	\$8,100	\$810

To offer a preschool/kindergarten program at the Hopkins Wilderness Park, the City of Redondo Beach requires that *Seeds of Joy Village* is listed as an Enrichment Program in the Youth Classes section of the City's Quarterly Newsletter/Activity Guide (www.redondo.org). Therefore all new parents must first register on the city's website so payments can be processed through the City's online system. *Please call 310-318-0610, ext. 3460 to get an individual ID Number (Personal Barcode) and Family Pin Number. Thereafter you may register online following the steps below.*

After you have registered and made your first payment through the city site, you will receive a payment reminder from SOJV before your next payment is due online (around the 15th of each month). You pay one month ahead of time for the following month.

YOU MAY PAY YOUR MONTHLY DUES IN TWO WAYS:

A. Call the city's administrator, **Carrie Diaz** or dial extension 0 (zero) , Monday -Friday (closed every other Friday) between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, at **310.318.0610 x 3383 or x 0**, and provide your credit card information and course number (See table above).

B. Online - Find your individual *ID number (Family Barcode) and family pin number* at the bottom of your receipts. Then go to <https://recweb.redondo.org/Start/Start.asp> and click on "[Click Here to Begin Registration](#)". You can either search for Seeds of Joy or find the program under Youth>Child Development>Seeds of Joy Classes. Click "Register" for the Course/Barcode (see table above), insert your individual ID number (personal barcode) and family pin number and follow their directions. The City charges a \$3.00 processing fee every time you make a payment. You will receive a receipt as proof of payment for your records. **Forward a copy of this receipt to Alethea at Aletheasojev@gmail.com.** Follow the same payment process every month.

If you do not pay by the due date a \$25 late fee will be assessed for the first day late and \$10 every day thereafter. It is vital that payments are made by the due date so payroll can be processed in a timely manner.

How Are Members' Dues Utilized?

Seeds of Joy Village, Inc. has an independent contractor agreement with the City of Redondo Beach for the use of the classroom space. In accordance with the contract, SOJV pays 30% of its gross profit to the City of Redondo Beach. The dues also pay for the teacher and classroom aide salaries, insurances and any other expenses.

Do Officers of the Board and Board Members get compensated for their work?

According to our current bylaws, *board members* are not compensated for being on the board. Board members are active stakeholder with voting rights. On the other hand, *officers of the board* (president, treasurer and secretary) may be reasonably compensated for the many hours they spent helping to run the school. So, the treasurer is an "officer" with an accounting job, who is also a "board member". This person is executing two different roles, but only the officer role may be reasonably compensated. Officers are board members but not every board member is an officer.

Trial Period

The first four weeks are a trial period for both the newly enrolled students and their families, and for our school. During these four weeks the lead teacher observes the child and how well they integrate into our program. If the parent/guardian or the teacher/board feel that this is not a good fit, either party can terminate the contract without further tuition obligation and a prorated materials fee will be refunded.

Early Withdrawal

A written notice of intent to withdraw must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the withdrawal. As a non-profit *Seeds of Joy Village* relies on dues to meet the yearly budget. Therefore an early termination fee equivalent to one month tuition will be collected.

Refund Policy

Should the board president deem a refund necessary, a written agreement shall be signed stating the amount and reason for the refund. *Seeds of Joy Village* will issue a check for the agreed-upon amount no later than 30 days following the date of the agreement.

Additional Fees & Services

Application Fee, Materials Fee, Grounds Fee, Deposit

New applicants for our preschool/kindergarten program will pay a one time, non-refundable application fee of \$75 per child when submitting the application. A \$400 non-refundable enrollment deposit is also required to reserve a spot for your child and to schedule a home visit by the teacher. This deposit will be applied toward the materials fee that covers the cost of crafts and other school supplies once the child is officially enrolled. There is also a non refundable grounds fee of \$500 which covers the cost of the use of the beautiful 11 acre park we have full access to each day.

Re-enrolling members for our preschool/kindergarten program must also pay the yearly \$400 non-refundable materials fee that covers most classroom materials, and submit their re-enrollment form for the next program year before the end of the school year to reserve their spot. The non refundable \$500 grounds fee may be paid before the school year in Sept at our orientation.

Material fees and grounds are paid directly to *Seeds of Joy Village* treasurer or president by cash or check.

If a child leaves *Seeds of Joy Village* for any reason and decides to re-enroll at a later time, a new \$75 enrollment fee must be paid upon re-enrollment.

There is no materials fee for our parent/toddler sessions, the enrollment fee is as follows. Parent toddler requires a one time enrollment fee of \$75 per child. This covers all sessions you attend and is a one time fee. If you would like to reserve your spot over the summer break for the first parent/toddler session I, as space is limited to 12 children at the discretion of the teacher, a \$75 non-refundable enrollment fee must be paid directly to SOJV by check, made out to Seeds of Joy Village, Inc.

Special Needs Assistance

If, after careful observation, the lead teacher recommends that the child may benefit from a special needs program, then the lead teacher will meet with the child's parents to share her observation. Please note, at no time is the lead teacher's determination a diagnosis as that diagnosis should only be made by evaluators who possess the proper credentials.

Frequently Asked Questions

How Can Parents Best Support The Teacher In The Classroom?

As parents and teachers, we are joining together in a special partnership for the growth and development of your child. As partners, we need to be in close communication. You are the "eyes and ears" at home as the teachers are the "eyes and ears" at school. We are not asking that you turn your home into a Waldorf school. The individual home lives are as essential to the children's growth as the quality of education they receive at school. Here are a few ways of working together to support your child so he/ she may reap the most benefit from his/ her experience.

Learn about and embrace the principles of Waldorf education. Attend parent study groups and parent information meetings. Communicate with the teacher regularly, not only if you have concerns but also when you notice positive changes in your child. Create a home environment that supports what is taking place at school by encouraging imaginary play and eliminating media exposure.

Make sure your child arrives on time and is properly dressed for the weather and activity. Show willingness to assist whenever assistance is needed. Inform the teacher ahead of time if your child might be absent from school for a few days.

How Many Days Will I Work In The Classroom?

Parents work/participate in the classroom approximately once a month, when class has full enrollment.

How Am I “Trained” To Work In The Classroom?

When in the classroom, the teacher will be your guide. You will spend much of your time in the kitchen, setting the snack/ lunch table and preparing crafts. Being in the classroom environment will give you the unique opportunity to observe and learn more about the Waldorf rhythm. A pair of “extra eyes” is always appreciated to secure the safety of the children.

We Are A Dual-Working Family. How Can We Make It Work?

Many of our members are dual-working families. At least one parent has some or limited flexibility in their schedule so he/ she can participate in the classroom and beyond. You may also trade in-class participation time with another parent or trade for a weekend tidy-gnome grocery-gnome shift.

How Do Parent Participation Programs Benefit The Child, The Parents And The Community?

The child learns to establish meaningful relationships not only with children, but also with adults other than their parents. Being great imitators, children learn about the importance of working in a community. Parents have the privilege to experience Waldorf education in practice. They will also become more familiar with what it means to be a teacher worthy of imitation. The community is rewarded with children who respect others, and families who know what it takes to create a caring community.

Calendar

SEEDS OF JOY VILLAGE CALENDAR 2019-2020



August 2019

Aug 31 (Sat) Parents Move-In/Unload Pod

September

Sep 2 **Labor Day – Holiday***
 Sep 3-5 Parents Unpack/Classroom Set-Up
 Sep 6 (Fri, 6PM) Parent Orientation Meeting
 Sep 7 (Sat 4PM) **All Family Welcome Potluck at Wilderness Park**
 Sep 9 **First Day of Preschool**
 Sep 18 *Open House (1:30 pm and 5 pm RSVP)*
 Sep 18 Turtle Parent-Toddler I (1) starts
 Sep 20 Butterfly Parent-Toddler I (1) starts
 Sep 26 **Michaelmas (Children Only)**

October

Oct 2 **Apple Picking Field Trip Yucaipa**
 Oct 14 **Indigenous People Day – Holiday***
 Oct 16 Parent Meeting (6pm) (Parents only)
 Oct 24 **Parent/Teacher Conference I (No School - Parents only) ***
 Oct 30 Turtle Parent-Toddler I (7) ends
 Oct 30 **Magical Halloween (5pm)**

November

Nov 1 Butterfly Parent-Toddler I (7) ends
 Nov 6 *Open House (1:30 pm and 5 pm RSVP)*
 Nov 11 **Veterans Day – Holiday***
 Nov 13 Turtle Parent-Toddler II (1) starts
 Nov 13 **Lantern Walk (5pm potluck/walk)**
 Nov 15 Butterfly Parent-Toddler II (1) starts
 Nov 25-29 **Thanksgiving Break – Holiday***

December

Dec 2 School resumes
 Dec 4 Parent Meeting (6pm) (Parents only)
 Dec 5 **St. Nicholas (Children Only)**
 Dec 11 **Advent Spiral (6:30pm) (All Families)**
 Dec 16-Jan 2 **Winter Break – Holiday***

January 2019

Jan 6 School resumes
 Jan 14 *Open House (1:30 pm and 5 pm RSVP)*
 Jan 20 **MLK Jr. Day – Holiday***
 Jan 15 Turtle Parent-Toddler II (7) ends
 Jan 17 Butterfly Parent-Toddler II (7) ends

Jan 29 Turtle Parent-Toddler III (1) starts
 Jan 31 Butterfly Parent-Toddler III (1) starts

February

Feb 5 **The Gentle Barn Field Trip**
 Feb 13 *Open House (1:30pm & 5pm RSVP)*
 Feb 12 **Parent/Teacher Conference II (No School - Parents only) ***
 Feb 13 **Valentine's Day Celebration (Children only)**
 Feb 17 **President's Day – Holiday***
 Feb 20 **Re-Enrolment Papers Due**

March

March 4 *Open House (1:30pm & 5pm RSVP)*
 March 11 Turtle Parent-Toddler III (7) ends
 March 13 Butterfly Parent-Toddler III (7) ends
 March 21(Sat) **Community Spring Potluck (10:30am Point Vicente Interpretive Center)**
 March 25 Turtle Parent-Toddler IV (1) starts
 March 27 Butterfly Parent-Toddler IV (1) starts

April

April 8 *Open House (1:30pm & 5pm RSVP)*
 April 6-10 **Spring Break – Holiday***
 April 12 **Easter Sunday – Holiday***
 April 13 **School resumes**

May

May 7 **Mother's Day Tea 12:30pm**
 May 13 Turtle Parent-Toddler IV (7) ends
 May 15 Butterfly Parent-Toddler IV (7) ends
 May 16 (Sat) **May Fair (All Families, Friends etc.)**
 May 25 **Memorial Day – Holiday***

June

June 4 **Last Day of School/ Parents Pack Up/ Children's Beach Day**
 June 8-11 Parents Pack Up School
 June 13 (Sat) Parents Load POD Container

(* No School)

PARENT-TODDLER CLASSES - 7 WEEK SESSION WEDNESDAYS (Turtle) and FRIDAYS (Butterfly)

9:00 am – 11:00 am WED & FRI and 10:45 am – 12:45 pm FRI
 See above Calendar for start dates, we have 4 sessions during the school year.

Recommended Readings

Book Title	Author
<i>How to Talk so Kids will Listen & Listen so Kids will Talk (available as a CD and on You Tube as well) - must read!</i>	Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
<i>Simplicity Parenting</i>	Kim John Payne
<i>You are your Child's First Teacher</i>	Rahima Baldwin Dancy
<i>Understanding Waldorf Education</i>	Jack Petrash
<i>Seven Times the Sun</i>	Shea Darian
<i>Endangered Minds</i>	Jane Healy
<i>Over the Rainbow Bridge</i>	Patterson & Bradley
<i>Your Five Year Old</i>	Louise Bates Ames
<i>Raising Boys</i>	Steve Biddulph & Paul Stanish
<i>Parenting Well in a Media Age</i>	Gloria DeGaetano
<i>Positive Discipline</i>	Jane Nelson
<i>Waldorf Education, A Family Guide</i>	Fenner & Rivers
<i>Connecting with Young Children: Educating the Will</i>	Stephen Spitalny
<i>The First Seven Years</i>	Edmond Schoorel
<i>Understanding Your Child</i>	Bari Borsky & Judith Haney
<i>Therapeutic Storytelling: 101 Healing Stories for Children</i>	Susan Parrow
<i>Raising Lions</i>	Joe Newman

Note: Please support SOJV by shopping for books or by making a donation on our website www.SeedsofJoyVillage.org. Go to the homepage, then scroll down to 'Shop and Fund' and click on *MightyNest for Schools*. A portion of your purchase will be directly donated to our school.

Online Resources

Website	Website
www.WaldorfLibrary.org	www.WhyWaldorfWorks.org
www.WaldorfResearchInstitute.org	www.AllianceforPublicWaldorfEducation.org

Handbook Modification

Seeds of Joy Village reserves the right to periodically update this handbook in an ongoing effort to improve clarity. Should it be necessary to modify any major parts such as pricing or changes in policy, we will inform each family in writing at least 30 days prior to their effective date. Should you choose not to accept the new terms you may, upon receiving notification of the terms, choose to terminate your contract effective the day the modifications take effect. Any outstanding payments will be due at this time; however, you will not owe tuition beyond the effective date of the modifications.