



Parent Handbook

History

We Play Outside was started by two preschool teachers who wished there was a better option for our youngest learners. So much time in classrooms is spent teaching kids to sit down and be quiet. We founded an outdoor daycare so children can learn through play - messily, loudly, and according to their own interests.

Mission Statement

At We Play Outside, we believe in the value and uniqueness of each child and family we serve. Our outdoor in-home daycare is designed to promote each child's individual social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. As caregivers, teachers, and moms ourselves, our mission is to provide a fun and developmentally appropriate learning environment that fosters each child's natural instinct to explore, discover, create and become a lifelong learner and enthusiast of the outdoors.

Philosophy

We believe that in the right environment, a child's natural curiosity and creativity leads to endless opportunities for growth and a genuine love of learning.

At We Play Outside, that environment is our backyard—an experiential play space where children are encouraged to build, splash, dash, pretend, and create their way through meaningful discoveries about the world around them.

Children can join the We Play Outside family as early as age one and continue growing with us throughout their early years—and even into their teenage years through volunteer opportunities.

Each day is an opportunity for your child to grow socially, cognitively, emotionally, and physically. From the earliest ages, children benefit from outdoor, screen-free play.

Our approach is simple: slow down, savor childhood, and make space for real experiences—rather than rushing into academics too soon.



Hours of Operation

Regular hours are Monday-Friday from 8AM-5PM.

Extended Morning hours are 6AM-8AM and Extended Evening hours are from 5PM-7PM. These extended hours are \$10/hour, calculated at a prorated rate. This is in addition to the daily fee.

Students may attend full time, part time, or drop in hours.

We Play Outside is closed for the following holidays:

July 4th, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas, New Year's Day.

Please refer to our yearly calendar for additional closures and details.

Licensing Notebook

We Play Outside is an in-home program voluntarily licensed to serve up to 16 children by the Utah Department of Human Services. A copy of the licensing rules is available for review in person and on the web:

<https://adminrules.utah.gov/public/rule/R430-90/Current%20Rules?searchText=R430-90>

Tuition

Financial Agreements

Upon enrollment (and whenever tuition changes), families will receive a Financial Contract outlining their child's schedule and weekly tuition. Please review this carefully.

This contract is binding and may only be changed with approval and signatures from both the family and Ms. Lauren.

*** Yearly Supply Fee: \$100 annual supply fee to be paid by parents on the anniversary of the start date***

Payment Schedule

Tuition is paid through Brightwheel. Ms. Lauren will assist you with setup. Invoices are sent through Brightwheel when tuition is due. Timely payment is expected.

Subsidized Care- DHS

We Play Outside accepts childcare assistance. Families are responsible for full tuition until authorization is received. After approval, families are responsible for any assigned copay.

If assistance ends for any reason, families are responsible for full tuition starting on the date coverage ends.



Multiple Child Discount

Families with two or more children enrolled full-time at We Play Outside are eligible for a \$10 discount to be applied to each additional sibling's daily tuition fee.

"It Takes A Village" Discount

Families who commit to volunteering 5 hours a month will receive a \$5 discount to the daily rate or hourly total. Volunteer hours can be honored in many ways such as 15 minute daily bursts, a once a month 5 hour long stretch, or anything in between. Volunteer hours can be split (for example, two parents, a grandparent, an aunt, and an uncle could all contribute 1 hour of volunteering to qualify for a family's 5 monthly hours). If families have multiple children enrolled, the volunteer time does not compound. For example, a family with 3 children would commit to volunteering 5 hours a month NOT 15 hours a month.

Some volunteering ideas include:

Daily clean up tasks, outdoor maintenance, meal preparation, storytimes, teaching a skill, substitute teaching, gardening, etc.

Volunteers will not be left alone with children unless a background check is completed. Volunteers will be supervised by Ms. Sam and Ms. Lauren.

Insufficient Funds

Returned payments will incur a \$25 fee. Missed payments and late fees must be resolved within 7 days. Repeated issues may result in termination of care.

If you're having trouble with payments, please talk with Ms. Lauren—we're happy to work out a plan when possible.

Delinquent Accounts

A \$5/day late fee will be added starting on the third day after payment is due. Accounts that remain unpaid without communication or a payment plan may result in termination of services. Accounts are considered "in good standing" once a payment plan has been agreed upon and signed.

We know that life happens. Please communicate with Ms. Lauren about any situations that may impact your payments so we can provide support.



Play Based Outdoor Learning

Daily Schedule and Activities

We find a balance between providing structured learning activities and allowing plenty of time for child-led play throughout the day. We incorporate story times, music, games, early literacy (ABC pre-reading concepts), early math, art, and fine and gross motor activities - all in ways that feel **natural, engaging, and fun** for young children.

Outdoor Play

At We Play Outside, we believe kids need to be outside as much as possible. Children play outdoors year-round, including in the winter. Only during extreme weather conditions will we remain indoors.

We use the Utah Child Care Weather Watch guidelines to help determine when temperatures are no longer safe for outdoor play.

In the summer, please dress your child in light, breathable clothing. We provide shade, water play, drinking water, fans, ice, and popsicles to help children stay cool. Sunscreen is applied every two hours. If a child shows signs of overheating, we immediately move indoors.

In the winter, children must come with appropriate outerwear (coat, snow pants, boots, gloves, etc.). Please label all items. While we have some extra gear, we do not have enough for every child every day.

Part of our program is helping children learn independence—how to choose weather-appropriate clothing and how to put it on themselves (zipping coats, putting on shoes, etc.).

Outdoor play gives children the space to run, climb, explore, and fully use their bodies in ways that aren't possible indoors or in a classroom setting. It also supports social development, creativity, and emotional regulation. Outdoor play allows kids to soak up the sun (and the vitamin D that sunshine provides!).

In a fast-paced, overstimulating world, outdoor play gives children something different—a chance to slow down, breathe, and just be.

While outside, Ms. Lauren and Ms. Sam are fully present, actively engaged, and closely supervising at all times.

That said, outdoor play does come with some natural risks. Scrapes, bumps, and bruises may happen even with careful supervision. When they do, we provide appropriate first aid and keep you informed.



Sunscreen

Families are asked to provide sunscreen for their child. A permission form must be on file before sunscreen can be applied.

Sunscreen is applied by Ms. Lauren and Ms. Sam every two hours and as needed throughout the day.

Nap/Rest time

At We Play Outside, we play outside—and we rest inside. Children are provided a daily nap or rest time in accordance with Utah licensing. Sleeping children rest upstairs with video monitoring.

Children who do not nap are given a quiet space for rest and calm activities. Children are not forced to sleep but may be expected to rest quietly for a period of time.

Please send a labeled comfort item (blanket or stuffed animal) if your child uses one. Nap items will be sent home weekly for washing.

Weapons/Violent Play

We Play Outside maintains a strict no-weapon-play policy. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any kind or to pretend that objects (including hands, sticks, or blocks) are weapons.

If this type of play occurs, it will be gently redirected toward safer, more appropriate alternatives.

Pets

Sir Gusarufius Kirklangus (Gus) is our beloved daycare dog. He is professionally trained and wonderful with children. Gus knows commands such as sit, stay, lay down, wait, and “place” (his dog bed). He also wears an e-collar that provides a gentle vibration, used only if needed to reinforce commands.

Gus is a big boy (about 100 lbs!) with an even bigger heart. His happy, wagging tail is a sign of his excitement—but it can occasionally bump into little friends despite our best efforts to keep space and supervise closely.



Having Gus as part of our program gives children the opportunity to learn kindness, respect, and confidence around animals. They practice gentle interactions and experience the joy of caring for and connecting with a pet.

If your child is allergic or uncomfortable around dogs, please let Ms. Lauren know to determine if We Play Outside will be the right fit for your child.

Field Trips

We Play Outside occasionally takes neighborhood walks, including trips to Summit Park (about a 0.4 mile walk). Park days will always be communicated ahead of time.

Wagons are used to support younger children as needed. Safety is a top priority—we maintain proper ratios, perform frequent head counts, use safety vests, and follow safe street-crossing procedures. A first aid kit is always brought along.

Meals and Snacks

Food Service Policy

Children attending full-day care are provided breakfast, lunch, and two snacks.

We follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines to ensure meals are balanced and nutritious. Menus are posted on our website, Facebook page, and near the front entrance. Printed copies are available upon request.

Children are encouraged to try all foods, but are never forced to eat. If your child has dietary restrictions (vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerance, etc.), please let Ms. Lauren know. In some cases, families may be asked to provide alternative food from home.

Food From Home

Families are welcome to bring treats to celebrate birthdays or special occasions. Please check with Ms. Lauren before bringing homemade items.

We encourage simple, lower-sugar options when possible.

Food Allergies/ Action Plans

If your child has a food allergy, a Food Allergy Action Plan must be completed and kept on file in the kitchen.

If medication is required, the plan must also be signed by your child's physician.



Toddlers Programs

For toddlers, families provide: diapers, wipes, diaper cream, bottles, formula (if used), extra clothing, pacifiers, blankets, and a comfort item for rest time. Please label all items.

Pacifiers are used during rest time and kept in backpacks during the day to help reduce the spread of germs.

If you are breastfeeding, please coordinate feeding preferences and schedules with Ms. Lauren.

We recommend introducing new foods at home first to monitor for possible allergic reactions. Menus are available so you can see what foods will be served.

What to Provide

Clothing and Items from Home

Please send your child with:

- Extra clothes
- A water bottle
- Sunscreen
- A small blanket for rest
- A pillow (if needed)
- Weather-appropriate clothing

Play Clothes

Children should come in comfortable play clothes and shoes each day. Outdoor play is active—and often messy. Paint, dirt, water, and food are all part of the experience, so washable clothing is best.

Accidents and spills happen at all ages. Please keep a full change of clothing (including underwear) in your child's backpack. We will let you know if extra clothes are used so they can be replaced.

Items from Home

Children may bring a comfort item (such as a stuffed animal) for nap/rest time.

We recommend leaving special or valuable items at home. We Play Outside is not responsible for lost or damaged belongings.



Arrival and Departure

Arrival

Parents are required to walk their child into the home each day. Please check in briefly with Ms. Lauren or Ms. Sam to share anything helpful about your child's morning (sleep, mood, meals, etc.).

Separation can be hard—and it's completely normal. Keeping drop-off routines consistent and confident helps children adjust more smoothly over time.

Departure

Please communicate your expected pickup time. If you are running late, let us know as soon as you can through Brightwheel.

If someone new will be picking up your child, you must notify us in advance. They must be listed as an authorized pickup person and be prepared to show identification.

For safety, the door remains locked during care hours. Please ring the doorbell upon arrival. Ms. Lauren or Ms. Sam will greet you and help gather your child's belongings.

For safety, please keep your child with you at all times when leaving and do not allow them to run ahead to the car.

Attendance

If your child will be absent, please notify Ms. Lauren via Brightwheel or phone as soon as possible so we can plan accordingly.

For extended absences (more than 5 days), please provide written notice with the expected return date. If a child is absent for 10 days without communication, enrollment may be terminated.

Holidays and Vacation

Extended Absence

If your child will be gone for an extended period (such as summer break), please notify Ms. Lauren at least 14 days in advance when possible.

A \$10/week holding fee will apply to keep your child's spot reserved.



Health and Safety Policies

Illness

Our top priority is keeping all children healthy and safe. If a child becomes ill at daycare, they will need to be picked up as soon as possible.

Children will be sent home if they experience:

- A fever of 101°F (under the arm)
- Signs of severe illness (lethargy, persistent crying, trouble breathing, wheezing, or uncontrolled coughing)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Blood in stool not related to diet or medication
- Persistent abdominal pain

This is not a complete list. If we have concerns about your child's health, we will contact you through Brightwheel and/or by phone.

Please notify us if your child will be staying home due to illness so we can plan for the day.

Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of illness.

Children and staff wash hands:

- Upon arrival
- After diapering or using the toilet
- Before and after meals
- Before and after administering medication
- After coming inside
- After handling pets
- After cleaning or handling garbage

We take time to teach proper handwashing habits in a fun, age-appropriate way.

Medications

All medications (prescription or over-the-counter) must be given directly to Ms. Lauren in the original container, labeled with the child's full name and birth date.

A signed Medication Authorization Form is required before any medication can be administered. Medications are administered only by Ms. Lauren or Ms. Sam, and each dose is documented.

Documentation of Accidents/Incidents

Any accidents or incidents will be documented in Brightwheel. Parents will be asked to review and sign the report, and it will be kept in your child's file.



Documents of Allergies

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in the kitchen. All Staff will review the Allergy Action. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure

Families are required to complete and keep updated an Emergency Contact and Consent Form.

This allows us to seek emergency medical or dental care if needed. In the event of a serious injury or emergency, 911 will be called first, followed by parent notification.

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporters

As childcare providers, we are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Utah Department of Human Services.

Biting & Behavior Guidance

Biting and physical behaviors can occur in young children as they learn to communicate. We respond with close supervision, redirection, and teaching appropriate ways to express needs.

If behaviors become ongoing, Ms. Lauren will work with families to create a support plan.

In cases of repeated unsafe behavior, children may need to be picked up early or, in rare cases, may not be a good fit for the program.

Home and School Partnership

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is our main form of communication. The App allows you to stay connected throughout the day with messages, updates, and photos.

It is also used for billing and invoices. Please check Brightwheel regularly for important updates and communication.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a top priority at We Play Outside. Personal information about children and families will never be shared without written consent.

When discussing children in the program, we use first names only.



Photos & Marketing

We Play Outside may share photos of children in program-related materials such as our website, emails, or social media. We have a Photography and Video release form that will be signed upon enrollment with your preferences.

As a courtesy, any photo of your child will be shared with you before it is posted publicly.

We Play Outside Handbook Agreement

You can find our Handbook agreement at www.we-play-outside.com. A copy will also be sent in the registration packet. A handbook agreement must be signed and initialed before your child starts their first day.