

Welcome to Kinderfolk!

Another school year is starting and we are all looking forward to getting to know you and your children in the months ahead. Kinderfolk always strives to create a close relationship between school and home, between teacher and parent, believing that one complements and enriches the other and helps to make the experience the best it can be for everyone. Hopefully this booklet will answer some common questions you as parents might have, whether this is your first experience with preschool or your last. If you're wondering about something not covered here, just ask! All the Kinderfolk teachers are happy to discuss any question or concern with you at a mutually acceptable time. Our foremost concern is always the safety and well-being of your children. Thank you for entrusting them to our care.

Kinderfolk Preschool Mission Statement

Kinderfolk is a pre-school for all children regardless of race, ethnicity or religion where learning will take place in an environment of love, caring and safety. Our students will learn to interact in a loving, caring and accepting way, celebrating and appreciating both similarities and differences among their classmates. They will be prepared for Kindergarten and elementary school both socially and academically, learning how to share, express themselves in a positive manner, think creatively, and become familiar with beginning academic instruction.

Getting Ready to Go...

What should my child wear?

We can't stress enough the importance of dressing your child in clothing that can be messed up, and shoes that will run and climb and hop without falling off. All the teachers understand that parents want their children to look nice for school--we are all parents too--but preschool is busy, active and messy!

At Kinderfolk we paint something nearly every day. We glue and finger paint and stir up icing and muffin batter. We have an ample supply of waterproof paint smocks, which we always use for these messy days, we use washable tempera paint and Elmer's School Glue, and teachers are always very careful, but it is impossible to prevent paint and glue from soiling shirtsleeves and pants or skirts 100% of the time. Please save the cutest and hardest to clean clothing for home or special occasions, and dress your child in clothing that can get dirty.

Appropriate footwear is another consideration. Our day at Kinderfolk usually includes some kind of gross motor play. "Duck Duck Goose," bike riding, walks downtown and playing on the climber are all favorite Kinderfolk activities that are repeated on a regular basis. To help your child have the best time possible and to remain injury free, we ask that you make sure they wear shoes that are closed or have straps on the back. We discourage flip flops, sandals, and clogs without straps, as it is difficult to run or walk in them without sometimes unexpectedly falling out of them or tripping.

Once chilly weather arrives we also appreciate it very much if you mark your child's outerwear with their name. It might be surprising to learn that very few children recognize their own jackets when they are hanging in with their classmates' jackets. Having names in them simplifies considerably getting ready to go outside to play or to go home.

Can my child bring in a favorite toy from home to play with at Kinderfolk?

We ask that no toys from home be brought to Kinderfolk and ask that you explain this to your child. In the excitement of playing with their friends, toys from home are sometimes broken, or children put them down and lose track of them. At clean up time, the toys from home get mixed up with the Kinderfolk toys and cannot be located at dismissal. This always causes distress. It is easiest to make "No toys from home" the rule from the first day of school. There is so much to play with at Kinderfolk, that toys from home really aren't necessary. That favorite doll, teddy bear or "blankie" could wait for them in the car and will be there for hugging when they are picked up at the end of class.

What's the best way to say "Good-Bye" to my child?

We suggest a quick and cheerful good-bye at the classroom door, even if your child seems initially reluctant. Kinderfolk encourages age-appropriate independence for your preschoolers, which helps prepare them for Kindergarten. They like deciding for themselves what "job" they'll put their name on for the day and which project they'll try first. The first and longest part of our daily schedule is set up to allow them to make those decisions. They don't have to go to the project tables right away if they'd rather greet their friends and play for a while first. There's time for everything.

Allowing children to make these appropriate decisions for themselves gives them a sense of mastery of their environment and self-confidence in their abilities. If they have a problem finding their name or deciding what they want to do first, their teachers are there to help them. How nice for your children to find their world a little larger, meeting two more "grownups" who want to help them and who they and their parents can trust to do so.

What if my child cries when I leave?

Your air of cheerful confidence will give your child confidence. A prolonged and concerned leave-taking, especially if a child is already upset, communicates to them that there is good reason for them to be upset and that you are reluctant to leave them with their teachers. While undeniably unpleasant and stressful, crying when parents leave is very common, particularly in the first few weeks of school. All Kinderfolk teachers have much experience in calming children who are upset and helping them to transition from parents' care to preschool. We busy them with projects and engage them in conversation or involve them with a friend, and it is our experience that they soon begin to have fun and enjoy themselves.

In addition, all our teachers have been in your parental shoes at one time or another, and we know very well how difficult it is to leave a child who doesn't want to be left. Be assured it is rare for a child to continue to cry for longer than 10 or 15 minutes after you leave and it is usually much less. Please also know that if a child should ever be absolutely inconsolable we would certainly contact the parent. No one wants your child to be miserable. We also find that crying when parents leave drops off sharply by as early as the second week of school, and we hope it reassures you

to hear that when using this quick and happy good-bye strategy, we have never had a child who failed to adjust to being left at Kinderfolk for class.

How sick is too sick to go to school?

Particularly during the late fall and winter months, runny noses, colds and intestinal bugs are a fact of life in the preschool classroom. Once cold and flu season begins, good health habits are stressed and practiced in all Kinderfolk classes. Proper use and disposal of tissues, correct sneezing and coughing etiquette and hand washing are all discussed and implemented. Despite all these precautions, however, eventually every parent has to decide whether their child's symptoms warrant a stay at home or whether it's okay to send them to school. To help you decide, we appreciate it very much if you go by the following guidelines:

Please keep your child home from school if he or she has:

- **A fresh cold**
- **A bad cough**
- **A fever (even low-grade)**
- **Stomach or intestinal discomfort**
- **Vomiting in the past 24 hours**
- **Been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours**

We know that sometimes your child will tell you that *they* want to come to school, but we thank you sincerely for using *your* better judgement in making the right decision. If your child should become ill at school, we will call you to come and get them at your earliest convenience. This is to try to prevent the spread of viruses and infections and to safeguard the health of classmates and teachers.

Should I let someone know if my child will be absent?

We do appreciate a phone call if your child will be absent or significantly late as it helps teachers with planning. If it is early and there is no one in the classroom when you call, just leave a message on the answering machine. Both morning and afternoon teachers always check the messages when we arrive for the day. The phone number is 523-6147.

Once At School...

Our family has a special talent or holiday tradition. May we come in to share this with my child's class?

All Kinderfolk teachers welcome visitors to the classroom! We encourage parents and grandparents with special hobbies, talents, foods, pets, and family or cultural traditions to arrange with a teacher to come in and share those with the class. Through the years we have enjoyed story time with a Children's Librarian who was also Maddie's grandma, Japanese origami lessons, Chinese New Year gifts and Spanish and German storybooks and food treats. We have had a violinist play for us and a ballerina has danced for us. We've learned the right way to wash our hands with "Magic Glow Bug" lotion from a nurse, played with a litter of kittens and listened to music played on an autoharp. All these visitors bring the wider world within your child's reach and they learn so much.

Teachers are also eager to hear about any suggestions you might have for age-appropriate field trips for your Kinderfolkers. The more resources we have, the more enriching our program will be for your child and their classmates.

How will I know how my child is doing in school?

Kinderfolk Preschool conducts formal Parent/Teacher conferences every year. The afternoon Pre-Kindergarten class conferences twice a year, in January and in May; the January conferences held before Kindergarten Registration to address issues of readiness. The morning classes conference once a year in late April or May. However, this is not the only opportunity you have to question your child's progress.

Foremost, we cannot stress emphatically enough how valuable it is to go directly to your child's teachers with any question and concern you might have. It is the best and most direct way to have a question answered or to address a worry, and quick solutions can often be worked out immediately. All Kinderfolk teachers are eager to speak with parents who wish to discuss something and will welcome your questions.

Please do be aware, however, that while arrival and dismissal are seemingly convenient times to have a chat with a teacher, they are actually very difficult times for the teacher to give you her undivided attention. Children are arriving and need to be greeted and settled into the classroom, and attention paid to make sure that enthusiastic young painters don't help themselves and spill the paint. At dismissal, we are making sure that every child meets his or her parent and no one leaves the building unattended. Certainly during class time our focus must be on the welfare of your children, and you can see that these demands on teachers' attention

might make it hard to confer with a parent with 100% concentration.

Here's the solution: check with a teacher to make sure it's a good time for them to speak with you. If it's not, be assured they will suggest a better time for a phone call or a one-on-one meeting to give you and your question their full attention.

May I go along on class field trips?

We encourage parent participation on all field trips, and most are designed to be family and school activities rather than just children and teachers. During the year, and in some classes more than others, trips will be arranged that require transportation by car. Teachers are prevented from transporting any children in their own vehicles by insurance liability. In addition, Pennsylvania's car seat law requires that every child be fastened into a car seat. Because of this, we rely heavily on parents willing to transport their own children on visits to places that are too far away to walk. Please know, however, that we don't just welcome you as transportation! School picnics and trips to the Pumpkin Patch are all good ways to get to know each other and make new friends, both for the children and for their parents.

Is it okay for my child to play on the climber after school is over?

We like that the outside play area is a place where families tend to gather before and after school, and we encourage you all to linger and visit while your children play. To prevent injury to your child and damage to the climber, we have a few basic rules that are designed to protect the children as well as the climber. While your children are playing, please be mindful of these rules and enforce

them. That way, there is no confusion when we go out to play as a class and everyone is safer.

The rules are simple:

- Slide *down* the slide and do not climb up the slide. No one wants to get kicked in the mouth.
- Only *crawl* through the tunnel. Do not stand, jump or sit on top of the tunnel.
- No jumping off the climber to the ground. We don't want any broken bones.

Are there any opportunities to meet parents from other classes and the other teachers?

Kinderfolk works very hard to build a sense of community among its families and with teachers. After all, we're all there for the same reason - your child! A common Kinderfolk experience is that the friends your child makes at Kinderfolk often remain their friends through the years that follow and the same seems to hold true for parents as well. We gather as a school 4 times during the school year, giving everyone a chance to get to know each other. There's an All-School Picnic in early September, a Halloween Party, a Winter Holiday Party, and an End-Of-The-Year Picnic.

How will I know what's going on at school?

You will receive a monthly newsletter on the first class day of the month detailing the lesson plans for all classes, upcoming events, seasonal notices such as snow day information, enrollment

information, classroom needs and other news. In addition, we use the front doors as a temporary notice board. If something comes up unexpectedly, or there is something new to which parents need to be made aware, teachers will post a notice on the glass doors. There is a bulletin board outside the classroom door where sign-up sheets for picnics and parties as well as field trips and Parent/Teacher conferences are posted and "Tuition Due" reminders are written. In addition, there is a small bulletin board in the hallway to the classroom where you can look for displays of artwork, occasional snapshots of Kinderfolkers at work, information on the teachers and copies of the newsletter. As always, if there is something you are wondering about and it isn't covered in the newsletter or in other postings please just ask your child's teachers.

May I bring a special snack to school for my child's birthday?

Absolutely! Kinderfolk is always happy to celebrate birthdays or other occasions with special treats. Please do check the date with your child's teachers beforehand, however, so we don't end up with two sets of birthday cupcakes on the same day and send everyone home with upset tummies. Also, we ask that you please make the cookies or cupcakes (or whatever your child wants to bring) all the same. While it is certainly considerate to offer a choice between, say, chocolate and vanilla cupcakes, invariably we are left with two chocolate cupcakes and a child who wants only vanilla, and often tears are the result. It is much easier on everyone to offer only one kind of anything.

My child is having a birthday party. May I use their Kinderfolk mailboxes to distribute the invitations?

If everyone in the class is invited to the party you are welcome to use the Kinderfolk mailboxes for the invitations. If only a few of the children are invited, or the party is “girls only,” for example, we ask that you mail the invitations from home. Kinderfolkers are very conscious of “mail” in envelopes placed in their classroom mailboxes and get very excited about it. If only a few of the children receive something, those who don’t have “mail” get upset. We don’t want anyone to feel left out.

Nuts and Bolts...

Tuition Policy

Kinderfolk Preschool is proud to be entirely self-sustaining, and receives no financial subsidy from Beaver Memorial United Methodist Church, but it is crucial to our program’s financial health that monthly tuition is paid in a prompt and timely manner.

Kinderfolk has modest financial goals. We strive to maintain a preschool program of exceptional quality, offering a wide variety of experiences to your children, while at the same time, doing so in a cost-effective way. We are mindful that monthly tuition can sometimes strain the budget of hardworking families, and so we do our best to keep costs under control. Each year our goal is to pay our building usage fee, pay our teachers, pay for snacks, supplies, and field trips and perhaps realize a small profit, which is then used to buy something significant for the program. The climber in the outdoor play area is the result of several years worth of profit and careful budgeting.

Please note:

- **Payment may be made any time before the end of the month.**
- **Payment may be by the month, by the semester or by the year.**
- **Kinderfolk prefers payment by check which should be made payable to “Kinderfolk Preschool.”**
- **Please indicate on the check the month for which you are paying, not the child’s name, so proper credit can be assigned in the tuition records.**
- **We regret that we cannot refund or forgive tuition for extended vacations**

Should a prolonged absence be required by a death or illness in the family, or tuition become an unmanageable burden due to loss of employment or other catastrophic circumstance, please contact the director immediately to discuss the situation and work out a comfortable solution. All discussions and arrangements of this nature are kept in strictest confidence between the parent and the director.

Our tuition payment policy is generous and flexible and we thank you for making sure your account is always paid in full.

Curriculum Goals

The Kinderfolk curriculum is designed to help each child develop physically, emotionally, socially, creatively, and intellectually. Each child receives a balance of teacher-directed and child-selected activities in order to meet their individual needs, and to help develop confidence, motivation, and self-discipline. Many learning experiences are activity-oriented with the emphasis on “learning by doing.” These activities include field trips, visits from community helpers, pets and parents; also, daily work with a

variety of materials to increase each child's experiences in art, music, literature, reading and math readiness, science and drama. Group activities (large and small) are used to help each child develop communication skills and to perceive themselves as a positive contributor to group endeavors.

Policy on Confidentiality

The Kinderfolk Preschool classroom is one in which the individual needs and rights of the student are respected. It is also one, however, that exists as a community of learning where the good of all students as a group is valued and interrelated. To that end, the following confidentiality rules are established:

- As a rule, all students' private information, such as, but not limited to, family situation, medical needs, and economic status will remain confidential.
- It is recognized that limited situations will arise in which certain confidential information must be shared in order to maintain the integrity and cohesiveness of the Kinderfolk learning community as a whole. Examples of this may include, but may not be limited to, individual behaviors, infectious illness and disease, and reasons for lengthy absence.

Policy on the Kinderfolk Partnership

As stated in Kinderfolk Preschool's Philosophy, "Kinderfolk teachers, in close partnership with parents, are committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that is safe, stable, and nurturing."

- In support of that philosophy, the Kinderfolk Preschool director and teachers reserve the right to maintain this partnership in an effective and reasonable manner.
- If it is determined that a parent can no longer reasonably be part or supportive of that relationship, and has consistently acted either by words or actions in violation of that partnership, they will be asked to withdraw their child from the school.
- Should the problem persist and the request to withdraw be ignored, then Kinderfolk Preschool reserves the complete right to dismiss the child with or without prejudice from the school.

Policy on Classroom Behavior

The Kinderfolk classroom is a learning community having as its goal the positive growth of intellectual ability and social skills. For this learning community to be effective, the behavior of all children toward teachers and peers must be acceptable and appropriate.

The following types of behavior will not be acceptable in the Kinderfolk classroom:

- Any behavior that puts another child in danger.
- Any behavior that causes peers to become distressed.
- Any behavior that interferes with the effectiveness of the Kinderfolk program.
- Any behavior that is not responsive to the authority of the teachers.

If there is a pattern of persistent negative behavior, the Kinderfolk Preschool director and teachers will take appropriate steps to remedy the situation. These steps will include:

- Collaboration with the parents to develop an individualized program that will help the child learn more socially acceptable patterns of behavior. Such a program will define the kind of behavioral change that is desired and specify the time period within which change will be expected.
- If the parents are unwilling to work with the teachers to develop and support an effective program of change, or if a positive behavioral change is not forthcoming within a specified period of time, the child will be asked to leave the program.

Policy on Food Allergies

Kinderfolk Preschool is deeply committed to the health and safety of the children in our care. With the rise of food-related sensitivities and allergies, Kinderfolk has instituted a policy for the safe handling of food and snacks which will ensure the protection of children and staff alike.

- Kinderfolk requires that parents of children with food allergies provide written documentation of which foods are and are not allowed. Kinderfolk Preschool reserves the right to ask that written documentation be submitted directly from the child's pediatrician.
- Kinderfolk requires that parents of children who have allergies to food provide snacks for those children to consume. Snacks will be kept in the classroom in bins labeled with the child's name and will not be shared with anyone else.

If parents fail to comply with these requirements, they will be asked to withdraw their child from the program.

Policies approved by
Kinderfolk Preschool Board of Directors
June 21, 2011



Kinderfolk Preschool's Parent Handbook

(570) 523-6147

<http://www.kinderfolkpreschool.com>

kinderfolkpreschool@yahoo.com

<http://www.facebook.com/kinderfolk.preschool>