



Dear Parents,

I am happy to welcome you to our Nursery class and to our school. I understand the very important and difficult choice you have made by entrusting your child to us, at a time of much unsettling fluctuation. I am committed to creating a healthy, joyful, safe space for your child to initiate exploration and discovery with all their senses, in age appropriate experiences, while at the same time fostering the structure needed to become part of our small Nursery community. You too will be able to form a community of individuals connected by the interest in offering your child a Waldorf Education, growing to understand it and learning much from each other.

At this time of the year, as the outer environment tells us that summer is winding down, in spite of the heat that is to come, there is a crispness in the air and a change in the sounds and colors of nature that announce Fall is coming. Living in my gardening for the last several weeks, I have noticed that even the smells are different: tomatoes, peppers, melons and mint send a gentle swift aroma now. When quiet and slow, I can rejoice in them. The most noticeable change though is the length of the days: the sun rises a little later each morning and the evening comes earlier. Nostalgia can creep up as we try to get ready for school days.

However, school awaits! And, as excited as you might be about nursery school starting, you might have many questions. Here, I will give you a glimpse and hopefully answer a bit of your queries and concerns. However, please feel free to communicate with me, via e-mail, or a phone call. As Waldorf teachers, we know how much a child feels supported when the relationship of parents and teachers is strong.

Visiting days: These are scheduled for your child to connect with the teachers and become familiar with our grounds prior to the first day of school. Depending on the child, you might need two or three visits. Please, contact me with your preferences. Each family will come for 25 minutes, one at a time.

Saturday, August 29, 9-11:00 am: 9, 9:30, 10, 10:30, 11

Tuesday, September 1st, 11-1 pm: 11, 11:30, 12, 12:30

Wednesday, September 2nd, 9-11:30 am: 9, 9:30, 10, 10:30, 11, 11:30

Orientation: It will be outdoors on Monday, August 31st at 5:30pm, for parents or guardians (only). We will talk about the first days, our daily and weekly rhythms, class meetings, drop-off and dismissal procedures, and answer any questions that may arise.

First Days: School begins Wednesday, September 9 with the Nursery children transitioning gradually from home to school: Wednesday, 9-10, Tuesday 9-10:30 and Wednesday 9-11.

Outdoors: Our nursery will be outdoors! Our yard, nature trails and gardens offer us a variety of natural spaces where the children can learn, grow and play in ways that are optimal for early childhood education and development. (Recently, there has been much written about the benefits of outdoor education.) In the winter, or when the weather is inclement, we will come indoors as needed.

Communication: More important than before, it is essential we find ways to stay in touch, to connect and work together on your child's behalf. Please contact me with a question or to hear about your child's day.

Phone calls and emails: Both are my preferred ways to communicate.

Emails: gallardom@waldorfgarden.org to pose a question or concern, to send information.

Phone calls: 718-578-1808 to discuss and have a focused conversation.

516-742-3434 to leave a message with our school's receptionist.

Bi-monthly Class- meetings: will keep you informed of your child's experiences, provide opportunities for you to learn more about Waldorf education and child development, and weave us into a rich and diverse class community. We will begin with on screen meetings and participation in Class Meetings is required for all families.

Pre-scheduled meetings: When needed, teacher or parents can request a meeting to hear specifically about their child's progress, receive suggestions and support.

Parent Teacher Conferences: Are scheduled for October 30th and February first.

Class-Parent: Zinnaria Williams Liu is starting her third year at our school. She is eager to get to know you and help you navigate the world of the nursery. She is happy to have you contact her: email and phone number: zywyzmd@gmail.com 914-330-2529

Google classroom: This will be for parents use. Information will come soon.

For your child:

Enter the school rhythm: It helps your child transition to school more easily if you turn off, or keep them away from, screens, do less, have more down time and shift to an earlier bedtime at least two weeks before school begins.

Separation: It is best to Not talk about school until it gets closer to starting date. Some children can become anxious with too unknowns or too much information. Here are two articles:

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/helping-preschoolers-cope-with-separation-anxiety>

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/managing-preschool-separation-anxiety-2764909>

How to speak to your child about going to school*: Below is a colleague's writing on it.

School outdoor gear and clothes

To support our daily work and play outdoors, we ask that your child have excellent quality outdoor clothes. (See suggested links below.***) All must be clearly labelled.

- Overall-style rain pants for daily outside.
- Hooded, breathable rain jackets.
- Sturdy rain boots
- Warm socks (Breathable wool is a good option inside rain boots.)
- Extra set of clothing kept at school: top, pants, underwear, socks, and a sweater or light jacket
- Child-sized backpack to carry back and forth from school that is large enough to put their extra layers into for the days that we need to shed layers, but not too large for them to carry.
- Child-sized sleeping bag for our morning outdoor rest time.
- Two child-sized masks and protective face shields. (Insert information on where to get them here.)
- Inside shoes: a pair of slip on or "Sneakers" with velcro that remain at school for school use only
- We request that all clothing worn to school be free of cartoons, picture graphics and logos.

Handbook: Please read the handbook for our dress code, media policy, healthy rhythm suggestions and much more: <https://www.waldorfgarden.org/wsgc-handbook>

PPE: We value the well-being of all of our community members. Please read our PPE protocol at: <https://www.waldorfgarden.org/school-opening-protocols/> We understand that following these protocols can be challenging, especially for our young children. We strive to bring warmth and care in meeting these requirements while keeping everyone safe and healthy.

Enjoy the long days that still call us to linger in the outdoors, in the intense colors, in the ocean water or in our minds. Make the best of your moments, while keeping your little ones needs in mind.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you very soon.

Warmly,

Monica Gallardo
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Excellent Durable outdoor gear:

- Abeko, available in several websites
- <https://www.polarnopyretusa.com>
- <https://oaki.com>
- <https://us.reima.com>
- <https://www.puddlegear.com/products/puddlegear-rain-mittens>
- <https://www.littlespruceorganics.com/organic-boiled-wool-winter-hat-otto/>
- www.landsend.com

** A Colleague's advice.

Talking with Our Children About Returning to School

By Stephanie Cleary

Children need loving communication and emotional support. The world is full of change; we need to make sure our children are reassured with honesty paired with calm connection. For parents, it is important to remember that young children are looking to us to guide them. We are modeling the calm surfer on an ocean of various waves, some calm, some intense. Even in the most challenging waters, we keep our view on the shore and through this, the children absorb our trust and ability to navigate even the most difficult waves.

Let's imagine ways you can support your child when returning to school this September 2020. Please give yourself time to find your own center of calm. This is a confusing time, that is undeniable. Even if we have to surrender into many unknowns, we must rely deeply on ultimate trust. When parents lean toward that trust and begin to live deeply into it, the children benefit and so does the world at large.

On a practical level, please remember to not over-talk. Model confidence about the opening of the school year and confidence in the teachers who are caring for your children. When a child feels your trust in the world, their trust grows. If a child exhibits nervousness or anxiety about school starting, reassure them. Acknowledge that these are interesting times and how grateful you are to belong to a wonderful school with teachers who love the children so much.

Some parents feel strongly about preparing their inquisitive children about changes they may experience at school. Yes, social distancing and mask wearing are significant changes in our world, and at the same time, we must remember the nature and resilience of human beings, especially the young children. Many children at this point have been taking part in or have been

exposed to others wearing masks. You might say to a child: “Your loving teachers, in order to continue to care for others, will remind children at times to wear masks. We are so lucky to have such caring teachers at our school. It is wonderful to be part of a community looking to help others.”

Some children will exhibit feelings about the return to school. The children have spent an extended time at home with family, so separation can raise resistance. The resistance may lessen if a parent helps emotionally prepare a child. Accept your child’s emotional expression as you would a wave on the ocean. Move with it, don’t fight it, and help them calmly navigate to the shore.

You might give your child a picture of starting school by gently saying, “When I drop you off at school/or before the bus picks you up, we are going to help everyone stay safe and healthy. Let’s pretend I am dropping you off (at school or on the bus). The bus driver or your loving teacher will be there and they will be so happy to see you! We will hug, and at the end of the school day, you will see me with my arms wide open, just like this!” Give your child a big hug - that physical hug will happen each day and can be the anchor they can rely on. Even if you return home late from work, that hug can happen even if the child is sleeping.

Please remember, over-talking can be burdensome and stressful for a child. Keep it simple, delivering your support from the center of self-assuredness and care. If you feel it is not authentic because you yourself feel like you are coming undone with confusion or uncertainty, respect yourself. Take time to notice your inner life and give yourself some self-care: meditate, breathe consciously, use lavender oil, speak about your feelings to a person who brings calm and center to your life, or seek a person to help you. Your child may experience your nervousness, but they will also experience your ability to meet it and take steps toward transformation.

Our school is a unique place. That warmth and care which the children experience will always be there. In these times of navigating larger waves than usual, we are so happy to be the ones to hold your child with our calm and reassurance. Together, we will support your children and before you know it, they will be confident surfers of not only the calm waves but the turbulent ones as well!