



## **Eyes of the World Nature Immersion Afterschool Programs PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Eyes of the World Nature Immersion fully embraces the outdoors and nature! As a roaming forest program, locations throughout the South Berwick area and surrounding towns are our classroom. This approach allows children to become familiar with these beautiful locations throughout our area.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

More than ever children need the outdoors and nature involved in their lives. Through outdoor-nature play, EOTWNI children develop self-esteem, a sense of purpose, the ability to overcome obstacles and organically develop learning skills. Children are allowed the time and space to learn from their own wonder guided by a child-led curriculum and place-based education.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Children will be educated and nurtured outdoors, organically achieving individually appropriate learning skills.
- Teacher will support the intellectual, artistic, physical, and social growth that is necessary for the development of the whole person.
- Children will foster connections that support an awareness of nature and responsibility for the environment through total nature immersion, regardless of the weather or season.
- Teacher will guide exploration of our living environment through observation, interaction, experimentation, inquiry and encourage children's personal work & play agendas.
- Children will observe, identify gain knowledge of local plants, insects, animals as well as the history of the land.

### **STATEMENT OF NON DISCRIMINATION**

Eyes of the World Nature Immersion does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, national origin, citizenship, religion, sex, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.

Due to the outdoor forest environment, a family provided one on one aide may be appropriate for some disabilities.

## **DAWN JENKINS- FOUNDER- NATURE IMMERSION SPECIALIST**

I grew up playing in the forest and along the ocean side. I knew I wanted to be a teacher from a very young age (both of my parents were teachers), so I started early in life babysitting and went on to receive my BA in Elementary Education in 1998. I have taught Kindergarten & preschool age children in public, private and Waldorf settings. I have always worked with children outdoors, integrating nature throughout my classrooms, curriculum and programs.

I founded a successful forest preschool that embraced a child-led curriculum offering a unique preschool experience based primarily outdoors in a hand-crafted outdoor classroom and the surrounding forest. I am going on my 30<sup>th</sup> year of teaching and working with children!

Eyes Of The World Nature Immersion was launched in 2019 to offer nature-based learning to preschoolers & elementary children as well as educators and schools!

I am happily married with 3 children, living in South Berwick, ME

## **NATURE BASED CHILD-LED CURRICULUM EDUCATION**

**Child-led curriculum** is based on the children's interest and passion at a certain point in time. Children thrive and learn best when their interests are captured. Learning occurs naturally through play. We strive to enhance the natural unfolding of the whole child leading to the development of capable learners.

**Place based education** immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum.

### **Specific Examples of Development through Outdoor Exploration & Activities**

**COGNITIVE**~ Literacy/Math/Science- Collecting, labeling, classifying, sorting, pattern recognition, storytelling, singing, building structures (engineering), cause and effect in natural world

**FINE MOTOR**- drawing, cutting, self-help skills, painting, sculpting, small scale construction, digging, breaking up dirt, carving

**GROSS MOTOR**- Hiking, climbing trees, running (on un-even ground), hopping, jumping, swinging, crawling, balancing on logs, circle games, large scale construction (fort building or lifting rocks)

**SOCIAL**- Conflict resolution, circle activities, group games/hikes, spontaneous & uninterrupted free play, group observation, storytelling, fort building, problem solving

**SENSORY** - Water & mud play, digging, sculpting, free exploration, smelling, tasting, nature collecting, weather experiences, music

**EMOTIONAL**- Uninterrupted imagination play, opportunities to problem solve & negotiate, journaling, observation of natural world, exposure to weather, self-help, breathing techniques

As children many of us, built forts, dug holes, made mud pies, daydreamed in special hiding places, and swung on vines. These activities are all nature play: unstructured childhood play in the outdoors. Nature play is not scheduled, planned, or led by adults. Instead, it is open-ended, free-time exploration and recreation. For many of us, this sort of nature play virtually defined our childhoods. Good outdoor clothes are a must. Children will need to be prepared for the weather that day. If the weather is safe, we will go out and play!

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

**Rye Elementary**-Tuesdays 2:45- 4:20

**Dondero Elementary**-Wednesdays 2:30-4:30

**Marshwood Great Works**- Thursdays 1:30-4

## **CLOSURES & MAKE-UP CLASSES**

### **Weather**

-EOTWNI fully embraces the philosophy of “There is no bad weather, just bad clothing”.

Weather conditions are monitored closely and class will be held rain or shine.

-EOWTNI reserves the right to cancel to due health & safety conditions such as lightning, winds above 25 mph, double digit wind chill or heat advisory

## **ENROLLMENT**

- All enrollment documents must be signed before children can begin school. These documents include a registration form & waivers.
- Families who choose to withdraw prior to the fulfillment of their enrollment for the month, will not be refunded their tuition.
- No refunds or make-up days offered for call outs
- Tuition for Afterschool programs will vary depending upon the school.
- **Payments accepted through: Venmo @Dawn-Jenkins, Stripe through website, Cash/Check accepted as well**

## **AGE REQUIREMENTS**

Elementary Age

## **DROP OFF & PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Children will meet at the school at the end of the day.

Parents will pick up at designated locations per school.

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Maine State Law states that any person who has reason to suspect that a child under the age of eighteen (18) has been abused and/or neglected must make a report to Maine Department of Human Services Maine Child and Family Services Center at 1- 800- 963- 9490, all staff are mandated reporters.

## **INJURED CHILD**

Minor injuries such as scrapes or small cuts are treated by First Aid certified staff.

If a child receives a head injury of any type, the parents or emergency contact person are notified by phone immediately. If a situation arises where immediate outside emergency care is needed, an ambulance will be called. We will then attempt to contact the parent or emergency contact concerning the injury and give information as to where you can meet up with your child.

## **HEALTH, NUTRITION, SNACKS**

Please let your child’s teacher know if your child has any food allergies that we need to take into consideration.

Please provide a healthy snack for your child. Please make sure your child has a full, large water bottle for the day. Because we are in the forest, there is no place for refilling water. I ask that no candy or soda is brought to class.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Dawn Jenkins' phone number is 207-393-0054 and email info@eotwni.com. Please text or call with immediate questions, information, or concerns during the time of camp. Please email outside of camp hours and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

### ***Facebook Page & Instagram***

Follow Eyes of the World Nature Immersion on Facebook or Instagram (Eyes\_of\_the\_world\_nature) for notes and photos of your child's time at the program!

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline is not punishment but rather teaching, guiding, and redirecting. We help children learn to get along with adults and other children, teach them to behave in an acceptable way and help children learn self-control. The purpose of disciplining children is to raise responsible, confident children who grow up to care about others and themselves.

- 1.) Redirection is the basis of our discipline policy. If a child is having a hard time making the right choice, the teacher will get down on their level and speak to them gently and offer them an alternative that will help them make the right decision.
- 2.) Children are encouraged to resolve conflicts on their own, as long as they are physically and emotionally safe. Forcing a child to say "sorry" can tie a meaningless emotion to the word. Human beings (for the most part) are naturally compassionate. They will feel empathy and regret for a friend and express that. Children are allowed to process a disagreement/conflict on their own. If they are constantly forced into saying the word "sorry" when they don't feel it, then they may learn that saying "sorry" will resolve all conflicts and therefore not properly develop these social skills.
- 3.) If a child is "tattling" or complaining about another child's behavior, as long as the children are safe, the teacher will encourage the child to speak to the other child about the issue. It is important for children to not only find their voice but gain confidence in themselves that they can handle a confrontation on their own. The teacher will stay within ear shot to assure that the situation is resolved properly.
- 4.) If a child is continuously disruptive they will be removed from the situation. The teacher will have the child sit with the teacher and offer them a quiet task that will help to settle them down. The teacher will speak to the child about the choices they need to make to continue playing with their friends.
- 5.) If a child's behavior does not improve throughout the day and is disrupting the other children's experience, safety or personal wellbeing, the parent may be asked pick the child up early. This behavior specifically includes physical aggression.

EOTWNI strives for open trusting communication between parents and staff regarding their child's experiences within the program. If a behavior issue is interfering negatively with the functioning of the program or the safety of the staff or any of the children, we will notify the parent or guardian and schedule a meeting. We will work cooperatively with the family to develop and implement strategies for successful interactions and behaviors. If all suggested strategies have been unsuccessful, EOTWNI reserves the right to dismiss the child from the program to maintain a safe environment for all. There will be no refunds

### **FOREST PLANT IDENTIFICATION, USE & FORAGING**

As part of our program, the children will be learning about the local plants & trees in our area:

- Some plants will be identified and observed only & not touched (ie: poison ivy, certain mushrooms) due to their safety factor or rarity.
- Some plants will be identified and used for projects (ie: pokeweed berries for painting, marsh grass as paint brushes, sticks for carving)
- Some plants will be closely studied for positive identification and allowed to be foraged & eaten (ie: yellow wood sorrel, sea pickles, birch twigs). No mushrooms will be allowed to eat or suggested as edible. I will make families aware of any edible plants discovered.

### **BARE FEET**

One of the wonders of childhood and nature are bare feet! Children will be allowed to take off their shoes as weather & location safely allows.

### **WATER & MUD**

Children will only be allowed to wade in or sit in water or puddles. They will be allowed to play with mud as much or as little as they like, within reason. Children will never be allowed in water above their knees. This policy will be strictly enforced.

### **CLOTHING & DAILY SUPPLIES**

*Appropriate outdoor clothing is mandatory*

#### **Warm & sunny days**

Shorts

Short sleeved shirt

Sun hat

Sturdy walking shoes/Sneakers or water shoes (no flip flops)

#### **Rainy or wet days**

Rain coat & rain pants, or Tuffo or Oakiwear suits

Knee high insulated waterproof boots (such as Boggs brand)

#### **Late Fall, Winter & Early Spring**

**Base layer:** wool, silk or polypropylene long underwear top and bottom-no cotton

**Mid layer:** Long sleeve wool or fleece sweater

Fleece pants

**Over layer:**

Insulated waterproof jacket with hood Insulated

Waterproof snow pants.

*KNEE HIGH* Wool socks-silk or synthetic liners are a plus

Gloves-waterproof, insulated liners are a plus

Hat-Fleece or wool

**Shoes:**

*Knee high* waterproof boots- This is important. As the snow in the forest accumulates, snow often will get into your children's lower set boots.

