

Dear Families:

Thank you for your interest in Aldo Leopold Nature Preschool! We hope you will join us as we continue to bloom and grow during our second year. Aldo Leopold Nature Preschool (ALNP) uses the natural world as a stimulus for children's growth and development. Children spend a majority of every day outside in the play area and exploring the Aldo Leopold Nature Center property that includes prairie, woods, garden and pond areas. Nature is the lens through which every aspect of play and learning are viewed.

Our seasonally-based curriculum draws upon aspects of Reggio Emilia, Waldorf and Montessori to combine in an environment rich in child-centered activities, discovery and innovation and a strong desire to learn by doing. It includes art, music, cognitive skill development, fine and gross motor development, social/emotional development, and a backbone of kindness, grace and courtesy. Children will learn through individual and group explorations and play.

Please let us know if you have any questions, and we look forward to welcoming your family to our school community!

Sincerely,

Tara Von Dollen  
ALNP Director

### **ALNC Mission**

To engage and educate current and future generations, empowering them to respect, protect and enjoy the natural world.

### **ALNC Beliefs/Value Statements**

We believe...

- When we are thoughtful about being inclusive in how we engage and educate, we help students to know that nature is for everyone and is a safe place to learn and explore.
- When we engage students in positive, hands-on experiences in nature, their curiosity is sparked and a lifelong connection to nature is made.
- When we educate students, nurturing a better understanding of the world around them, we foster an environmentally literate generation empowered to take positive ecological, social and fiscal actions.
- When we – as Aldo Leopold wrote – “teach the student to see the land, to understand what he sees, and enjoy what he understands,” empowered students take individual actions and create meaningful change – change that is critical to the sustainability and health of the natural world.
- When we strategically and thoughtfully work with community partners, we help them fulfill their goals while increasing our capacity to engage and educate students, creating healthy and sustainable communities everywhere.
- When we care for the land and are mindful of Aldo Leopold's land ethic, we are equipped to engage and educate students about the world around them – empowering them to preserve the land, providing a sanctuary for human, plant and animal communities.

### **ALNP Statement of Purpose**

To provide high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood experiences that foster a love of nature and a lifelong, meaningful relationship with the natural world.

### **ALNP Program Philosophy**

At ALNC Nature Preschool we believe that children are imaginative, capable, and wonder-full individuals. Children are ready and eager to learn about the world, the environment, and each other.

The teaching staff promotes the process of learning by:

- Providing both indoor and outdoor environments rich in hands-on materials, literature, and open-ended play time which encourages wonder, discovery, experimentation, invention, creation, and the opportunity to see the results of one's actions.
- Developing whole-child centered (physical, social, emotional and intellectual) activities that encourage growth based on children's abilities and interests.
- Encouraging problem-solving and reflection by asking open-ended questions and providing resources in response to children's ideas, insights, inventions, creations, and concerns.
- Assisting children in their interactions with each other and offering opportunities for conflict resolution and cooperative learning while nurturing a caring and courteous community.
- Appreciating the individuality of children and families and celebrating diversity.
- Engaging each child's the whole community, honoring the wisdom of their first teachers—the families and communities to which they belong.
  - As Aldo Leopold once said, "When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." ALNC's Nature Preschool aims to foster love and respect for the diverse natural and human communities to which we all belong.

### **Curriculum**

ALNP's thoughtfully balanced curriculum, and significant time outside, is designed to address each child's developmental needs (emotional, cognitive, physical and social) while encouraging curiosity, fostering love of the natural world, and developing the whole child. Educators serve as facilitators utilizing an emergent or child-centered approach (i.e., educators follow the child's lead) while maintaining teaching objectives that are process-oriented with both content and developmental goals included.

Daily activities include outdoor play, natural science explorations, block play, music and movement, art activities, sensory activities, language activities, dramatic play, and cooking or food experiences.

### **Typical Day at Nature Preschool**

We value seasonal spontaneity and take advantage of the "teachable moment." Children also benefit from knowing what will happen next. Our schedule is loose with predictable events throughout the day, such as snack or group experiences, to provide the security of structure.

### **Part Day (½ day) Sample Schedule**

The following is an example of a possible classroom schedule for a part-day program that includes a mix of plenty of play, independent and group activities, spontaneity and structure. (Order of activities varies depending on the educator and classroom.)

### **Arrival**

Class begins outside in the play area. The adult dropping off the child will make sure the child has used the restroom and put away his/her backpack or other belongings. The adult signs the child in for the day, then takes their child to the outdoor play area (dressed for the weather) to join the educators.

### **Outdoor Play and Group Exploration**

Children will play for at least 30 minutes in the outdoor play area, then take a hike on ALNC grounds. Play area activities include, but are not limited to, climbing, water play, sand play, snow play, fort building, digging, gardening, and dramatic play. Activities on ALNC grounds include hiking to and playing in the forest, prairie/fields, trails around the pond, the Sugar Bush and the Children's Shack.

### **Group Meeting**

Children take part in conversation, greet one another, engage in music and movement activities, practice mindfulness, and participate in other whole-group activities.

### **Snack Time**

Snack is served family-style, either inside or outside depending on the weather. Educators and children eat together, converse, share and listen to each other's stories. Children assist in clean-up and transition to choice time.

### **Choice Time**

Children have time to choose an activity among the different interest areas of the indoor or outdoor classroom. This allows children time to develop and grow in developmental areas through focus and gained competency with an activity. Children may choose activities that include but are not limited to: blocks, art, dramatic play, discovery, and sand and water.

### **Small Group**

Adult-directed activities occur in small groups and allow educators to focus on a particular skill set. These activities allow children to ask more questions and allow the educators to evaluate each child's needs and progress (according to the program objectives). This is an opportunity for more concentrated learning.

### **Ending Group Meeting**

This always begins with clean-up. It is important for children to feel invested in their classrooms by caring for the indoor and outdoor spaces. Children put away materials they have used and prepare for our end-of-class routine.

Inside: We gather on the rug to sing goodbye before families/caregivers pick up the children, signing them out in the lobby.

Outside: We assemble in the gathering space close to the building, sing a song, say goodbye and await families/caregivers to pick up and sign-out the children.

## **Full Day Sample Schedule**

The following is an example of a typical full day classroom schedule (only the aspects that differ from the half day are elaborated upon):

**Arrival**

**Outdoor Play and Group Exploration**

**Group Meeting**

**Snack Time**

**Choice Time**

**Small Group**

**Ending Group Meeting**

**Lunch (11:30-12:30)**

Children eat lunches brought from home in a family-style manner. As students finish their lunches, they clean up their spaces and then choose activities for the remainder of the lunch period.

**Rest**

Following the lunch period, children transition to rest time. Children visit the restroom, find their rest bin, choose a book and stay flat on their back. Children who do not fall asleep within 30 minutes will be able to choose a quiet activity. As children awake, they will visit the restroom and choose quiet activities until the entire group is awake. On nice days, rest time may occur outside.

**Afternoon choice**

Once all children have woken from rest, snack will be served. Then, for the remaining class time, children can choose an activity among the different areas of the indoor or outdoor classroom. Children may also be invited to participate in small group activities. Before pick-up, children will put away materials they have used and prepare for our end-of-class routine. They will sing a song, say goodbye and prepare for pick-up. Children attending after care will be helped through this transition by staff.

**School Year and Session Offerings**

Eligibility for ALNP is determined by the child's age by September 1 in the year of enrollment. Children must be three years old by September 1, no older than 5 and must be fully toilet trained (exceptions for children with special needs should refer to the Parent Handbook and contact staff to discuss inclusive accommodations). Children cannot attend both the morning and afternoon sessions. The 2020-2021 school year will run from September 8 through June 4. We will follow our own calendar, but will make an effort to align extended breaks with local school schedules. ALNP is a 9-month program and requires a commitment for the entire year.

Days of the Week	Times
Monday/Wednesday/Friday- morning	8:30-11:30 am
Tues/Thurs- morning	8:30-11:30 am

Tuesday-Friday- afternoon	12:30-3:30 pm
Lunch (available for T-F afternoon participants only)	11:30 am-12:30 pm*
Monday- Friday (full day)	8am-4pm
Before Care	Begins at 7:30 am
After Care	Begins at 4:05 for full-day classes

*\*Exact times are subject to change*

### Facilities

ALNP classes are held in a secure wing of the ALNC building with a private entrance. There are 2 classrooms, a lobby, offices, family bathroom and a mudroom (used by both classrooms). The classroom spaces are designed to provide the best possible preschool environment for young children. While children will utilize these indoor spaces, it is with the outdoor environment that children will spend the most amount of time. Two adults per classroom oversee a maximum of 16 kids in mixed-ages classrooms. Open-ended/hands-on materials encourage creative learning. Natural play spaces provide a supervised opportunity to connect with the natural world in large (climbing logs and digging) and small (sorting leaves), loud (cooperative games), and quiet (reading under a tree) ways. Daily hikes in the Aldo Leopold Nature Center acres provide for slowly expanding the opportunities and experiences.

### Tuition Rates

ALNP's goal is to be accessible to all families in our community and sets MONTHLY rates based on a sliding scale. Match your annual income and family size to your desired program to locate your monthly tuition rate for ALNP. Rates are determined by percent of Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) based on income.

Family Size	over 500% FPL	500-400% FPL	400-350% FPL	350-300% FPL	300-200% FPL	less than 200%*
2	over \$85,000	\$85,000-\$68,000	\$68,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$51,000	\$51,000-\$34,000	less than \$34,000
3	over \$107,000	\$107,000-\$85,000	\$85,000-\$75,000	\$75,000-\$64,000	\$64,000-\$43,000	less than \$43,000
4	over \$129,000	\$129,000-\$103,000	\$103,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$77,000	\$77,000-\$52,000	less than \$52,000
5	over \$151,000	\$151,000-\$121,000	\$121,000-\$106,000	\$106,000-\$98,000	\$98,000-\$60,000	less than \$60,000
6	over \$173,000	\$173,000-\$138,000	\$138,000-\$121,000	\$121,000-\$104,000	\$104,000-\$69,000	less than \$69,000
7	over \$195,000	\$195,000-\$156,000	\$156,000-\$137,000	\$137,000-\$117,000	\$117,000-\$78,000	less than \$78,000

8	over \$217,000	\$217,000- \$173,000	\$173,000- \$152,000	\$152,000- \$130,000	\$130,000- \$87,000	less than \$87,000
<b>2 Day (TR) monthly rate (8:30- 11:30am)</b>	<b>\$280</b>	<b>\$255</b>	<b>\$242</b>	<b>\$228</b>	<b>\$215</b>	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>
<b>3 Day (MWF) monthly rate (8:30- 11:30am)</b>	<b>\$420</b>	<b>\$380</b>	<b>\$360</b>	<b>\$342</b>	<b>\$320</b>	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>
<b>4 Day (T-F pm) monthly rate (12:30- 3:30pm)</b>	<b>\$575</b>	<b>\$525</b>	<b>\$480</b>	<b>\$432</b>	<b>\$390</b>	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>
<b>5 Day (M-F) monthly rate (8am- 4pm)</b>	<b>\$1,250</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>	<b>\$1,050</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>

*\*If your annual income is less than 200% FPL or you need additional assistance for other reasons, tuition assistance may be available based on need. Please complete a Tuition Assistance application that can be found as part of the Registration process online.*

#### 2020-2021 Lunch Add-on

In an effort to make our program more accessible for those families who attend a morning 4-K program (public), we have the option to add-on lunch to our Tuesday- Friday afternoon session. Families provide a lunch from home. Specific times subject to change.

<b>Tuesday-Friday (11:30-12:30pm)</b> <i>Exact times are subject to change</i>	<i>Available for T-F afternoon participants only</i>
<b>\$160/month</b>	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>

**2019-20 Before & After Care Rates**

Before & After Care helps meet the needs of busy families. Rates below follow the same sliding scale as above, with the exception of daily add-ons, which will be charged a set amount. Daily rates for before care are \$10 for morning (anytime between 7:30-8:30am) and \$15 for afternoon (anytime between 3:30-5:30).

	over 500% FPL	500-400% FPL	400-350% FPL	350-300% FPL	300-200% FPL	less than 300%*
<b>2 day (TR) Before Care monthly rate (7:30- 8:30am)</b>	\$93	\$85	\$80	\$76	\$72	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>
<b>3 day (MWF) Before Care monthly rate (7:30- 8:30am)</b>	\$140	\$127	\$120	\$114	\$107	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>

<b>5 day (M-F) Before Care monthly rate (7:30- 8:00am)</b>	<b>\$78</b>	<b>\$75</b>	<b>\$72</b>	<b>\$69</b>	<b>\$63</b>	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>
<b>5 day (M-F) After Care monthly rate (4:00- 5:30pm)</b>	<b>\$117</b>	<b>\$113</b>	<b>\$108</b>	<b>\$103</b>	<b>\$94</b>	<i>*tuition assistance available, indicate need in enrollment form</i>

### Registration Requirement

- Registration Form (includes contact information and is available online)
- Registration Fee
- Child is or will be at least 3 years old and no older than 5 by September 1 of registration year.
- Toilet trained (see the Parent Handbook for our inclusion statement)

### Enrollment Process

ALNP welcomes all children regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender or gender identity or familial status.

To have your child considered for admission to ALNP, you will need to complete a registration form and submit it with a \$75 non-refundable registration fee per child. You will receive a confirmation email that will include the next steps and placement process.

Registration payment includes a one-year membership to Aldo Leopold Nature Center. If you are already a family member of ALNC, your membership expiration date will be extended by one year.

Families currently enrolled will receive priority for re-enrollment beginning January 13th. Registration for the public for any remaining spots will begin on January 27th. Registrations received on or before February 9th will be reviewed the following week. Registrations received after February 9th will be processed on a rolling basis.

The week of February 17th, ALNP staff will contact you to confirm your child's enrollment. If more registrations are received than available spots, a lottery process will be used to determine enrollment. In the event that you are not admitted, ALNP will maintain a waiting list and contact you if a spot becomes available.



An effort will be made to grant each family's first choice for class days and times, however ALNP will attempt to balance classrooms with a mix of ages and other characteristics to create optimal learning environments.

At the time of confirmed enrollment, a \$200 deposit will be due within 10 working days to hold your child's place. Those receiving a *partial scholarship* are still required to pay a deposit. However, a deposit is not required for *full scholarship* recipients. This is a non-refundable, non-transferable deposit that will be applied to the tuition account. The deposit will not be refunded if you withdraw your child from the program.

A complete list of needed paperwork and documentation will be sent to you over the summer to help us prepare for your child's preschool experience. Some of the documentation required before each child's first day of attendance includes:

- Health History and Emergency Care Information
- Child Health Report (must be completed by physician within 90 days after the start of preschool)
- Immunization Record\* (must be completed by parent within 30 days after the start of preschool)
- Child Information Form
- First month tuition payment or full year payment
- Adult Agreement

We ask that you complete paperwork (online) as soon as possible and return it prior to Parent orientation (Date TBD) in August.

\*Please note that enrollment is open to those families with complete immunization records. ALNP aims to maintain herd immunity (a safe and healthy barrier to infectious diseases) for our families, staff and community and, therefore, at this time, ALNP only allows waivers for medical reasons (signed by a licensed physician).

### **Waitlists**

In the event that you are not admitted, ALNP will maintain a waiting list and contact you if a spot becomes available. The non-refundable fee of \$75 still applies if you are waitlisted or are not offered placement. When space becomes available, you will be offered placement. You will have 3 days to accept the placement and return the deposit to the Preschool Director. If the placement and deposit are not returned within 3 days, the space will be offered to the next applicant.

### **Tuition Assistance**

We know that providing the best quality preschool experience for your child represents a financial commitment. Nature Preschool has full and partial scholarships available to assist with tuition. If you are interested in being considered for tuition assistance, please complete the scholarship application (included in the online Registration process). Limited funds are available and determined based on need.

If you require a printed version, please contact ALNP Director at 608-216-9376.

### **Tuition Payment Schedule**

Upon notification of placement in the program, \$200 is due within 10 working days. This is a non-refundable, non-transferable deposit that will be applied to the first month of your tuition payment. Tuition is based on our 9 month school year; the June week is essentially taking the place of one of the holiday

break weeks. Each month's balance is considered a 1/9 portion or fraction of the total yearly tuition. Payments commence September 1, with subsequent payments due on the first of each month Sept-May. Tuition can either be paid monthly or in one lump sum (discounted).

**Discounts**

The following discounts may be available to families who qualify:

- Pay-in Full Discount 3% (pay the full-year tuition amount in entirety before September 1 and receive 3% off the total)
- Sibling Discount (10%)
- Staff Discount (10%)
- Only 1 discount may be applied.

**Family Involvement**

In choosing our program, you have already affirmed your support for the ALNP philosophy. By actively showing your child that you care about the school, a stronger sense of community and trust is developed. Talk regularly about your student's new experiences. Recognizing the important connection of home and school we ask that your involvement include:

- Attending Parent Orientation, held in August without preschoolers, where you will have chance to meet staff and learn what to expect for the coming year.
- Volunteering in the classroom. Consider sharing a special interest, talent or family custom or food. Talk to ALNP staff for details.
- Attending parent and family activities.
- Being available for a home visit and 2 conferences. The home visit will be arranged at Parent Orientation and will occur in late August/early September. This gives the new student a chance to meet his/her educator before school begins and for you to ask any questions and take care of any last paperwork. A second home visit may occur at the end of the school year. Conferences occur in late fall and early spring.
- Reading newsletters and flyers sent home with your child or via email.
- Communicating regularly with your child's educators and other ALNP staff.
- Signing the Adult Agreement (included with enrollment information).

**Snacks**

A healthy daily snack will be provided once per day for half-day classes and twice per day for full-day classes. Snacks may include water, vegetables or fruit, milk, and cheese, with an emphasis on whole foods. Snacks may also be special as the desires of the children develop to include cooking skills. We will also work closely with families to ensure meet the needs of every child, including those with food allergies.

**Important Dates**

January 27, 2020	2020-21 Registration packets available and Registration begins!
February 9, 2020	Registrations after this point are processed on a rolling basis
Week of February 17, 2020	ALNP staff will contact you to confirm your child's enrollment if you registered before February 9th.
August (Date TBD)	Parent Orientation
August (Date TBD)	Open House (meet and greet; children drop off clothes, etc)
Late Aug/Early September	Home visits
September 8	Paperwork needs to be completed
September 8	First day of school



Engage • Educate • Empower

**2020-2021 ALNP Calendar will be posted online soon!**