

Parent Information Packet



Welcome to Discovery Cottage Preschool!

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Goals & Objectives

Welcome to the Cottage! We are excited that you have chosen to enroll your child in our preschool! We are a youth enrichment program through Valpo Parks. We host enrichment programs for children ages 2 years - 5 years old. Our unique programs are designed to provide total hands-on and kid-centered learning experiences that allow them to use their own creativity and imagination! Through our differentiated curriculum, we encourage growth in the areas of physical, mental, emotional, and social learning.

Registration

Registration for classes is done monthly. Class registration for one month does NOT give a secure spot for future classes. Please register by phone (219) 462-5144, in person at the Valpo Parks Office, or through the website ValpoParks.org for the next month's class as soon as possible to ensure a spot! We request Kinder Ready parents to enroll for the entire year and pay monthly to ensure consistent readiness for kindergarten.

Once registered please look for an email containing Parent Paperwork to assist us in knowing who can pick up your child, any allergies, and bathroom procedures. Any cancellations of classes are subject to a \$10 fee, and no refunds will be given after a program has started.

Arrival and Pick-Up Procedures

Arrival: Parents may arrive no earlier than **5 minutes** before classes begins. The doors will be locked before this for safety reasons. Due to class schedules and staff limitations, there will be no supervision for children who are dropped off earlier than this time.

Pick Up: Parents will park in the parking lot and come inside to pick up their child at the end of class. Doors will be open 5 minutes before pick up time for safety reasons. **Please be on time.** Due to class schedules and staff limitations, supervision will not be available for children after class. If a child is

picked up 5 or more minutes after class, a warning will be given. If tardiness continues to occur, termination of services may result. If due to an emergency you are running late, please call immediately to notify the staff. During your first few weeks at the Cottage, parents or guardians may be asked to present their ID at pick up. This is to ensure the safety of your child and will not take too much of your time.

Safety

To ensure the safety of our building, the doors will always be locked, other than 5 minutes before and after class starts. The **entry and exit for Kinder Ready & Busy Bees is upstairs, Little Sprouts is downstairs**. If you need to enter the building during classes, a doorbell is on the outside by the front door (or knock on downstairs door). A staff member will unlock the door for you whenever possible.

Clothing

Children should arrive dressed for play and appropriate for the weather. Oftentimes our differentiated curriculum will include messy activities (they're kids!). We will provide a paint shirt when able, but please know accidents do happen. If desired, please provide children with an extra set of clothes to keep in a backpack or bag they will bring every day. **Nothing may be kept at the Cottage due to lack of storage space**. Weather appropriate clothing and outdoor wear is necessary too; we will be going outside if the weather is cooperative. **We will not go outside if temperature is warmer than 90 degrees F or colder than 25 degrees F**.

Snack/ Birthdays

Students may be served a special treat or food as part of the lesson plan (i.e.—apple tasting in our Apple Study) Students can also bring a **store-bought, nut-free** treat for his/her birthday, if you choose! Please notify a staff member a couple days before bringing in a Birthday treat just for planning purposes. Due to occasional snacks, it is vital to communicate any food allergies to all staff at the Cottage. Kinder Ready will have a designated snack time. Parents are encouraged to send in a healthy snack and water daily with their child. However, we do have snacks on hand if needed. Please remember that we are a NUT-FREE facility. Due to severe allergies, we have the right to not serve an item if it is in violation.

Bathroom Procedures

During toilet training, we ask that the child be dressed in “user friendly” clothing, as much as possible. The best items are shorts and pants with elastic waists, or dresses. Try to avoid really tight clothing, pants with snaps and zippers, and overalls. These are difficult for children to remove in a “hurry”.

Staff is limited to the amount of assistance they can give a child in the restroom. Occasionally a child needs to be changed because of a potty accident. Discovery Cottage will follow the instructions on the “Bathroom Procedure” paperwork that the parents filled out. If the parent has chosen to change their child themselves, a call will be made. If the parent has allowed our staff to help, staff will direct student to find their spare clothes and assist as needed.

Closings/ Delays

Discovery Cottage follows Valparaiso Community School’s closure decisions for weather. If you suspect schools will be closed, you may visit www.valpo.k12.in.us or tune into the radio station 105.5 FM for a list of closings. Closings will also be posted on our Facebook page, as well as an e-mail will be sent to parents.

Discovery Cottage does NOT follow any late/delayed starts from VCS. If a 2 hour delay is issued, Discovery Cottage WILL still be open for our regular hours. A delay will only occur if our building or vicinity is directly affected by weather. These decisions will be posted on our Facebook page, as well as an e-mail will be sent to parents.

Illness Guidelines

Promoting good health and safety is a priority at Discovery Cottage. To prevent the spread of childhood diseases and illness, please do not bring your child that is ill to class. A child must be symptom free (and on antibiotics, if applicable) for **24 hours before returning** to Discovery Cottage. We will send any child home immediately who exhibits any of the following:

1. Fever of 100 degrees or higher (Must be fever-free for 24 hours to return)
2. Vomiting
3. Eye discharge
4. Lice or nits
5. Communicable Disease: chicken pox, measles, etc.
6. Severe coughing (gagging and throwing up)

Medication

We do not give medication to children. If your child needs to be medicated in order to comfortably participate in class activities, then it is quite possible he/she are too sick to attend for the day. There may be exceptions for doctor prescribed medications, but that will be decided on an individual basis.

Photos/ Videos

We love capturing your child's learning experiences to share with you on our public Facebook page! In addition to giving you some insight into our daily activities, pictures and videos are used as materials for marketing and advertising for Discovery Cottage and Valpo Parks. A written consent form is provided for parents to decide if permission is given to include your child in these photos/ videos.

Discipline

Kids will be kids, but rules and guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of all our students and staff. If physical aggression or defiant behavior becomes a regular instance, further intervention may be needed to take place, such as a parent/teacher conference or ultimately withdrawal from class.

Parent/ Teacher Communication

Assessments will be given three times a year for our Kinder Ready students (November, February, and May) all assessments will be sent home. Staff is available for communication before and after class (although sometimes limited due to class schedules) and is always available in person at the end of the day. Please feel free to e-mail any questions or concerns at any time at cottagedirector@valpo.us.

Thank you for choosing Discovery Cottage as a home for both your child and family. We take our relationships with our families very seriously, and aim for a highly pleasant, welcoming, nurturing, and educational experience here at the Cottage. We look forward to having a wonderful school year with you!