**Wonder Years Academy**

**Information Packet**

**Philosophy:**

We are so excited that you have chosen Wonder Years Academy to be your child’s first school experience! We believe that positive exposure to the school dynamic is crucial to instilling a lifelong love of learning. At Wonder Years Academy we strive to develop this quality by emphasizing the following three areas of development:

1. Academics – focusing on kindergarten readiness skills including the alphabet, numbers, shapes, colors, etc. We introduce these concepts (and more) using fun activities and games, where we set up each child to succeed to build self-confidence.
2. Social Skills – this includes the importance of learning how to show respect and empathy for others by learning friendship skills, such as taking turns, problem solving, good manners, personal safety, good citizenship, respect for others and their property, etc.
3. Curiosity and Imagination – encouraging awareness of the world around us, by exploring science, occupations, stories, and art just to name a few of the topics and methodology we cover.

By providing these experiences in a safe and nurturing environment, Wonder Years Academy preschool will help your child become excited about knowledge as they take their first steps toward independence!

**Curriculum:**

The Wonder Years Academy preschool approach provides a broad learning foundation, in which your children are encouraged to try new things and ask many, many questions!

Our lessons each day are academically enriched as we focus on kindergarten readiness by introducing the alphabet (letter recognition, sounds, and writing); phonics; numbers (recognition and writing); shapes; colors; patterns; etc. Each child will have several opportunities each day to identify and write or color the letters and numbers of the day, expanding into shapes and colors. Both fine and gross motor skills are strengthened as children learn the basics of cutting, sorting, matching, etc.

These concepts are incorporated into our themed units, including fun-filled instruction and active exploration as we introduce themes such as:

Science:

* The animal kingdom, including domestic and wild animals
* Discovering the ocean and sea life
* The human body & the 5 senses
* Plant life
* Insects
* Dinosaurs
* Seasons and weather
* Holidays
* Money
* Music
* Transportation……

Imagination Builders:

* Classic fairy tales, nursery rhymes, and other characters taught through storytelling, dress-ups, music, puppetry, and more
* Occupations and careers that make our communities run, such as doctors, firefighters, farmers, postal workers, construction workers, etc.
* Culture experiences from around the world….

Social Awareness:

* Developing self-esteem through positive reinforcement, motivation, and modeling excitement about learning new things
* Learning appropriate group behavior, such as taking turns, standing in line, listening skills
* Respect for others, friendship skills, exhibiting good manners….*and so much more!*

Field Trips:

Educational field trips will also be taken throughout the year to locations that support our themes and lesson plans. Special Guests and Presentations are also much anticipated events that occur occasionally at our preschool as those opportunities arise.

Combined with lots of love and individual attention, the entire curriculum at Wonder Years Academy is intended to provide new, multi-sensory experiences that will develop self-confidence and an ongoing thirst for knowledge in your child!

Please take the time to read through this entire packet and complete and return the Waiver at the end. Knowing our policies and procedures at school helps avoid miscommunications between parents and teachers/administration so we can focus on providing an enriching preschool experience for you student.

**TUITION:**

**Monthly tuition is due on the first day of each month**, *regardless of whether that day falls on a weekend, holiday, school break, or whether or not your child was in attendance that day.* Most parents pay via Venmo, and that account is @WonderYears-1. Please add $2 to your tuition amount if paying through Venmo to cover the fee for each transaction that Venmo now charges us. We also accept cash/check, direct bill pay, or Paypal.

**PLEASE DO NOT PUT TUITION PAYMENTS INTO YOUR CHILD’S BACKPACK, BUT HAND DIRECTLY TO A TEACHER**.

A $15 late fee will be added after the 5th of each month, and if we still have not received tuition by the 8th of the month an additional late fee of $5 per day will accrue thereafter. Unless previous arrangements have been made with us, on the 10th of the month your child’s’ admittance to school will be suspended and the regular tuition amount plus all past due fees must be paid in full before your child can be readmitted to school. We DO NOT PRO-RATE tuition for illnesses, vacations, holidays, or other reasons.

**DAILY SCHEDULE:**

The following information is a general example of the activities we do during a typical school day, however these activities will vary depending on the particular lesson plan, weather, etc.

As your child arrives at school, they will be directed to remove their shoes and place them into the bin provided. PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD WEAR SHOES THEY CAN PUT ON AND TAKE OFF BY THEMSELVES! Each child will hang up their coats/backpacks on the hooks. Our day will usually consist of these activities:

* Tray time: The classroom will have at every desk a tray containing different choices of manipulatives or construction items and puzzles to use, as well as art stations and a sensory table to explore. Here the children practice new skills such as patterning, sorting, matching, as well as learning and enhancing fine motor skills.
* Circle time: We start with an approximately 20 minute lesson of the day, based off of our weekly theme. We practice the alphabet, numbers, days of the week, and colors using games, easel activities, stories, dramatic play, puppets and other methods.
* Music/Movement: This is a great time for our students to get their wiggles out! We sing familiar songs as well as learning some fun new tunes. We have movement games, experiment with musical instruments, and finger-plays set to songs. Some days we even have dance parties!
* Arts/Crafts: Each day there will be worksheets provided to each student to practice writing and recognizing the current letter/number we are working on. We may also reinforce them and/or our themed unit with a simple craft. These crafts will focus on basic skills such as correct crayon/pencil hand positioning, scissor skills, gluing techniques, coloring vs scribbling, and following directions.
* Free play: Children need this time to practice all those social skills as outlined under our Curriculum portion of this Information Packet. It is also vital that the students have time to use their imaginations. To facilitate this, we have a large playroom with an assortment of toys, dress-ups, art stations, sensory table, dramatic play items, blocks, and many more items which the children are free to use while they make friendships and practice sharing, empathy, patience, etc. These are rotated throughout the year so that there is always something new and enticing to play with at preschool!
* Snack: Most days a small snack will be provided to refuel the students for the rest of the day! We also have a drinking fountain available to the students at any time during preschool.
* Outside play: Weather permitting we try to get outside for a few minutes each day to work on those large muscle groups! In addition to weather, the ability to incorporate outside play time will also depend on the differing lengths of each day’s lesson plan. Students may play on any of the provided equipment in the back yard or simply enjoy social time with friends. Your child will always be supervised outside, but please understand that scraped knees and bumped heads are to be expected occasionally.
* Group story time: At the end of every day, we try to wind down by having some quiet time in our Library Area. This area has many preschool appropriate books for the children to read, as well as puzzles, magnet games, and finger puppets. The books and puzzles are also rotated throughout the year to avoid boredom.
* Pack-Up: As we finish our day at school we will instruct the students to get their coats/backpacks and shoes back on. (I will stress again that these must be shoes they can put on themselves please!!) We then line up at the door and head up to the front yard as an entire class.
* Show & Tell: On the first Thursday/Friday of every month we will have a portion of the day for Show & Tell/Sharing Time. Please plan on sending your child to school with a favorite item of their choice, and we encourage you to practice with your child ahead of time on some man points they’d like to share with the class about their item (where did they get it? does it do anything special? why do they like it? etc.) Occasionally we may have a themed Show & Tell that will require your child to bring something more specific, but we will inform you of those when/if those occasions arise. IF YOUR CHILD FORGETS TO BRING THEIR ITEM ON THE ASSIGNED SHOW & TELL DAY, we will ask them if they’d like to take a moment and tell the class something instead, such as about a recent play date or other activity. We CANNOT make up missed Show & Tell on a different day, as our lessons are planned several weeks in advance and time constrains prevent our ability to accommodate make–ups. We encourage parents to mark show and tell dates on their calendars to avoid disappointed children! And **PLEASE** – ***DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BRING TOYS TO SCHOOL ON ANY DAY THAT IS NOT SHOW & TELL DAY!*** Toys brought on other days get lost easily and are distracting to your child as well as the other students.

**IMPORTANT SCHOOL RULES AND PROCEDURES:**

**Pick-up/Drop-off Procedures:**

At Wonder Years Academy we want to ensure every child’s safety. When dropping off and picking-up your child from school we ask that you ***only drive and park on the correct sides of the street and NOT MAKE U-TURNS*** as U-turns create a safety hazard during these times. Our street (650 S) has entrances/exits going both east and west, making U-turns unnecessary for quick access out of the neighborhood and onto the main roads. We also ask you to remember that this is a neighborhood so please be respectful of the neighbors and do not block driveways or any parts of the road.

**Drop-offs:**

* A teacher will be up in the front yard when we are ready to admit students. Usually that teacher is there approximately 5 minutes before school starts, but occasionally it may be later if we are still busy preparing the school for that day’s activities. Always remain in your car until you see the teacher in the yard. **NEVER SEND YOUR CHILD DOWN TO SCHOOL IF A TEACHER IS NOT IN THE YARD.** The door is locked until a teacher comes up and takes attendance as your child heads down the stairs.
* Also, please do not allow your child to cross the street by themselves if you are parked across the street!
* If you are late to preschool, the teacher will obviously not still be in the yard, so it will be necessary for you to bring your child down to school yourself. Please **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD DOWN TO SCHOOL BY THEMSELVES;** your view is blocked once they enter the stairwell, so you could not see if they were to come back up and wander off looking for you.Again,the door is locked and if we are in the noisy classroom we may not hear your child knock to be admitted. We are not responsible for them until you and the teacher have met eyes and acknowledged that they are now in our care.

**Pick-Ups:**

* Please remain outside the building until the class comes outside together. We will then release each child once we have visual sight of a parent or authorized pick-up person. We will **not** allow a child to cross the street by themselves, so if you are parked and waiting on the opposite side of the street, please exit your vehicle to escort your student safely with you.
* **School ends promptly at 11:30 or 12:00 for AM classes, and 2:15 PM for afternoon classes, and being on time is extremely important** as children tend to get anxious when they see other children being picked up and they are not. Our staff also needs to begin cleaning and preparing for the next class immediately after school is over. We appreciate your cooperation. **A $5 fee will be applied for every 10 minutes you are late to pick up your child.**
* Please let us know in advance if someone other than mom or dad will be picking up your child, because the safety of your child is our #1 concern. **If there is someone that is NOT allowed to pick-up your child from preschool under any circumstances, please let us know immediately.**
* If you notify us ahead of time of a temporary circumstance when you might need to pick up your child early, we will do our best to have your child ready to go at that time, however you will still need to go down to the entrance door and knock to signal you have arrived.
* If you live close enough to walk or bike to pick-up/drop-off your child from school, please do not bring along pets unless they are securely on leash.

**Illness:**

When your child is sick, the best place for them to be is at home. Feel free to call ahead if you’re not sure if your child is well enough to attend school. A general rule of thumb is to ask yourself if you would want your child sitting next to and sharing toys with another student exhibiting the symptoms your child has.

We strongly request that you do not bring your child to school if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

* Fever of 100 degrees F or higher
* Visible rash or impetigo
* Vomiting
* Runny nose with drainage not clear in color
* Diarrhea
* Cough
* Draining eyes/ears including (and especially!) conjunctivitis (“pinkeye”)
* Lice
* Worms/parasites

Be aware that we will call you to come pick up your child if they exhibit not only the above symptoms, but also if they seem generally unwell or are complaining of feeling sick.

**Classroom Discipline:**

We expect all our students to be kind and respectful to each other, and as such we will model that behavior to our students. We believe in positive reinforcement as a primary disciplining tool, and would much rather prefer to “catch a child being good“ and then praise, rather than only correcting undesirable behavior. At the preschool age, however, both approaches are often necessary. If a student does not respond to requests for improved behavior, we will remove the child from the current activity for a few moments so they can calm down and think about/discuss the consequences of his/her actions. The child themselves determine when they are allowed to return to normal activities by demonstrating that he/she is willing to abide by the rules and behavior expected at preschool. For some children this will be but a minute, for others it may be longer. Our experience has shown that this approach, which gives the child control over the decision, works best because it is a motivating tool instead of merely a punishment. At times it may be necessary to take away free play or snack time. If discipline becomes a persistent problem parents will be notified and we discuss a solution together.

**Potty Training:**

We ask that all children attending our school be properly potty trained. However, if your child is still having only occasional accidents you may send him/her to school in a Pull-Up. Please know that we will call you to come change or pick up your child if they have an obvious bowel movement or have urinated through to the outer layer of clothing. **Due to safety and privacy reasons, we can NEVER change any underwear/pull-ups, or help children with wiping or cleaning up their bodies under any circumstances.** If your child has a toileting accident at school we will call you immediately to return to school and either clean them up or take them home and it may be necessary for the child to wait in the bathroom (supervised) for however long it takes for you to arrive. We request ALL students to have a clean pair of underwear and shorts/pants to be kept in their backpacks at all times in case of an accident – even if it has been a very long time since your child has had one! But, again, unless your child can change out of the soiled clothing, clean themselves up properly, and change into the clean clothing BY THEMSELVES, we will still need to call you to come take care of these matters with them at school.

**Snack Policy:**

We have a brief snack time at preschool most days. Snack consists of a small dry snack and access to the drinking fountain (which is available throughout the day). At snack time we are teaching the children independence, setting out/cleaning up skills, sharing, and responsibility. Children are never forced to eat the provided snack, however we do encourage a “no thank you bite”, which just means taking a small nibble before deciding they don’t want what is offered (but again, no forcing). We do not make snack substitutions upon a child’s request, and children are not allowed to bring their own snack from home except in the case of food allergies or if they are bringing birthday snacks. If your child does have a food allergy, please contact a teacher so we can make appropriate arrangements.

At Wonder Years Academy we have a community snack policy which means each family is requested to provide a small number of bulk snack items to add to our school pantry. Snacks are shared throughout our program so as to maximize our resources and avoid wasting food. Only store-bought, prepackaged items which contain NO NUTS are allowed in preschool in order to ensure food safety from both an ingredient and preparation standpoint. PLEASE READ LABELS! A bulk item should feed approximately 16 students. An example of 1 bulk item would be a large bag of mini pretzels. In order to make 16 servings, it may be necessary to purchase more than 1 package of an item (example, 2 boxes of granola bars containing 8 bars per box would still only be considered 1 bulk item). Examples of appropriate bulk snack items include (but are not limited to):

* Large box crackers: Goldfish, Ritz, Graham crackers, Wheat thins, animal crackers, Cheez its, etc.
* Large box fun fruit snack pouches or fruit roll-up
* Rice Krispie treats
* Large box/bag dry cereal that can be used as finger food: Apple Jacks, Honeycomb, Cheerios, etc.
* Large bag mini pretzels (not sticks)
* Mini bagels or muffins
* Granola bars (NO NUTS)
* Vanilla Wafers
* Tortilla Chips

Please do not bring items needing refrigeration (including cheese, yogurt/Go-gurt, fruit/vegetable slices as we

do not have adequate refrigerated storage space.

**Proper School Attire:**

STUDENTS MUST WEAR SHOES THEY CAN PUT ON BY THEMSELVES AT SCHOOL! This saves teachers a *considerable* amount of time so we can spend that time on more fun and interesting activities! Please reconsider those high-tops or shoes with buckles, etc. as it is incredibly time consuming to assist many children with this task. Slip-on shoes are ideal. It is a great idea to practice this important skill with your child at home both before they begin school and throughout the year – and include practicing putting on their coats by themselves, too! These are some of the first skills of independence your child may learn and they will be so proud to have accomplished them!

At preschool we use paints (watercolor and tempera, occasionally acrylic), glue, glitter, playdough, etc. in our arts and crafts, and often have sand, water, and other mediums in our sensory area. Please send your child in clothing that is suitable for this type of exploration. While we use “washable” materials and use protective smocks whenever possible, it is inevitable that some paint (or whatever) will get on your child’s clothes somewhere, sometime. It is best to have your children wear clothing that won’t be ruined by possible stains or spots. And please do not consider it unprofessional of us as teachers if we are also wearing *very* casual clothes – we use the same materials the children do each day, and we don’t want to ruin our good clothes, either!

**School Supplies:**

You will need to supply a back pack for your child, and our choice is the full-sized ones, even though they seem big on a preschooler’s body. This is because many of our crafts and other work gets smashed up in the smaller backpacks and it breaks our hearts to your child’s hard work ruined before they even make it home! Most of the supplies your child will use during the year are provided by Wonder Years Academy. However at the beginning of each year we do provide a list of our most used items you may choose to purchase and contribute to the school.

**Birthdays:**

YOU MUST CONTACT US DIRECTLY IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR CHILD’S BIRTHDAY RECOGNIZED AT PRESCHOOL. We do not automatically keep track of birthdays and plan these events. You may choose to celebrate on the nearest school day to your child’s actual birthday, or pick a “half-birthday” date for those with summer birthdays. We do not schedule birthday celebrations on days when we are taking a field trip, or are already having another type of celebration (such as holiday parties or a date another parent has already reserved for their child).

If you do wish to have your child’s birthday recognized at school simply email us to schedule a date. On the day you’ve selected your child will receive a birthday crown and be our VIP student for the day, meaning they will be first in line for activities and games, special helper, etc.! Your child may bring a store-bought snack to share with the class at snack time if desired (please see the school snack policy above). Birthdays are the rare time we accept more sugary treats (like doughnuts or candies) as long as they are store-bought for food handling safety concerns, and contain **NO NUTS.**

**Field Trips:**

We typically have three field trips scheduled each school year. These field trips will mainly be at no cost to you, however some venues may require us to collect a small admission fee. Each year we take fall field trip to a Pumpkin Patch in October, the local Fire Station in January/February, and a 3rd variable trip in late April/early May (such as to the Bean Museum or other site). These are subject to availability by the various venues. Occasionally additional field trip opportunities present themselves and we may take advantage of those as well. ALL field trips will be a combination of classes going together on the same day. This means that a field trip may not be held during your child’s normal attendance time on that day (for example, a field trip taken in the morning would combine both AM and PM students, meaning PM students would attend the field trip in the morning and have no regular class in the afternoon). For safety reasons, we no longer arrange carpools or provide parent chaperones for students, so if you cannot attend a field trip with your child it will be up to you to find a suitable substitute to accompany your child on the field trip (another preschool parent, grandparent, friend, etc.) Siblings/other adults may come along on some field trips, but due to the size of the venue we may have to restrict to the student and one adult only.

**School Year Calendar:**

We follow the Alpine School District (ASD) calendar very closely. This means that when the district has a day off, or a break – we do, too. Our monthly newsletter will inform you of these dates ahead of time so you should be prepared to know when preschool is not in session. These days off will also be posted to our website. We do reserve the right to change or add additional days off if needed. Rarely, there is an unscheduled day off due to snow or power outages; it is the responsibility of the parents to be aware of the possibility of these closures and to be looking on the ASD and Wonder Years Academy websites for any last minute notices. We will, however, email our student families just as soon as the ASD decisions regarding closures are made, and expect parents to monitor their inboxes as well for those updates.

The first and last days of school are NOT the same as ASD; our school years start a little later (the Tuesday after Labor Day) and end a little earlier (3rd week in May) to ease the beginning and end of year chaos for our families with older school children.

**Scholastic Book Orders:**

We are constantly encouraging reading in preschool, as a love of reading has been proven to make more successful future students! We love that Scholastic Book Club provides our student families with an affordable resource to build your home library. Every order earns us credits to redeem for books for our classroom, too! Throughout the school year we will hand out book order flyers in your child’s backpack. Due dates for the book orders will be on the monthly newsletter. You can either send back the flyer with a check, or order online using our class code N9GGD. Ordering books is completely optional, however.

**Teacher/Parent Communication:**

* Parent Involvement

We feel that communication with parents is **extremely** important. We want you to feel that you can come to us with concerns or questions about your child’s progress at any time. We are in this together, as a Parent/Teacher team, and as such we desire to work with you as to how to best help your child learn. Feel free to contact your child’s teacher at any time throughout the course of this school year, and don’t be afraid to play an active role in your child’s learning process. Please know that we will communicate with you if your child needs extra help in a certain area, or if we are noticing discipline problems. We are here for you, and we are here for your child and together we will find the best ways for your child to succeed!

* E-mails:

Our main form of communication with parents is Email. Throughout the course of the school year we will need to inform you about field trips, parties, special situations, tuition issues, and a whole lot more! You will likely receive multiple emails each month, so it is important that the email address we have on file is one you check regularly. Please keep us informed as to any change in your contact information so that we can be sure you won’t miss any important dates or information for your student.

* Newsletter/Calendar:

At the beginning of each month we produce a newsletter for all our parents. A hard copy will be sent home in your child’s backpack, and digital copies will be emailed to you as well as posted on our website. This newsletter reminds you of our past month of learning and also all the upcoming lesson plans and activities to look forward to. Having this information allows you as the parent to be able to reinforce at home the things we are learning at school. The newsletter includes a detailed calendar to ensure that all parents are aware of upcoming due dates/deadlines, days off, field trips, etc. Please use this document as a resource each month to stay up to speed with school events.

* Website: [www.WonderYearsAcademy.com](http://www.WonderYearsAcademy.com)

Please utilize our website for updated info and any information you may need. We update the website at the beginning of each month with the release of each new Newsletter and Calendar, so if you need any of this type of information please check there first. There is also a section called Photo Scrapbook where we post pictures of some of our happenings at preschool. (We don’t post these as often as we’d like because, well – we would rather be teaching, helping, and interacting with the students than documenting that process! We appreciate your understanding.) If you do not wish to have your child’s photo uploaded to our website at any time, please let us know. This website is public; therefore it is open for anyone to access. We have attached a release waiver to this document that allows your child’s photo to be on our website; if you do not desire this, please be sure to state so on the waiver.

