



Welcome
back to
School
friends



Welcome families to the 2023-24 school year. We are so excited to welcome you all. We started out over 28 years ago as a playgroup with a few founding mamas and have grown to a thriving school with over 600 students passing through our gates.

Our team:

Miss Laura- Executive Director

Miss Cindy- Finance Controller

Miss Kaleigh-Office Manager

College of Teachers:

Miss Adana- Pedagogical Chair (HB)

Miss Crystal (DF forest)

Miss Ira (HB forest hybrid)

Miss Jenna (BF M-T and TH-F)

Miss Hunter (DF2), Miss Jen (DF3)

Miss Celena (HB2), Miss Morgan (HB3)

Welcome
Families



All things Administration:

Our office is located in the yellow Kinderhaus. You may call anytime and we can come out to say hello 904-241-3259

Your admin team: Miss Laura, Miss Cindy & Miss Kaleigh
lcruz@theplaygarden.org (admin Q's)
cgrant@theplaygarden.org (finance Q's)
kmallard@theplaygarden.org (DCF documentation)

DCF requires that you:

Please call the office when your child is out sick.

Provide updated health forms and immunizations before expiration dates

Do not enter through gates or into houses: Gates and doors are to remain locked at all times. Call the office and we will be happy to come out to greet you.

Please do not park in the parking lot behind the Kinderhaus (the one with the pink doors). You may be towed. You may park in the Breezy's/Caribbean Connection parking lot/EAST side only. Please do not leave your car there to go to the beach 😊 but do stop by Breezy's for a snack or CC for surf gear.

Any paperwork or checks can be left in the lock box on the Cottage porch or lock box at the top of the Kinderhaus stairs.

*Don't give paperwork or \$ to teachers please, as they are focused on welcoming your children.

Our Classes:

Ladybug: 6 months-3 yrs
6 week Parent-child
classes on campus and
15 week sessions in the
forest

Butterfly (BF):
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -4 yr olds
3 hour class, 2 days

Hummingbird & (HBf) forest
hybrid (HB) 3-5 yr olds
4 hours class in the Cottage or
Kinderhaus 2, 3 or 5 days

Dragonfly (DF) 3-6
Dragonfly forest 4-6
5.5 hour class 2,3 or 5
days

More Offerings:

Forest Gnomeschool:
100% nature immersion
Kindergarten program,
sponsored by The
Playgarden, Inc.

Playgarden Under the
Stars:
Four evening sessions in
Fall and Spring. Dates on
our website.

Winter, Spring & Summer
Camp:
Check website for dates and
details

Wonderful Wednesdays:
3:30-5 parent lead play
for current and alumni
families.

Communication:

The Playgarden Handbook and Forest Manuals are your number one guides to all things Playgarden. Please be sure to carefully read this document that provides practical information as well as tips on sleep, nutrition and so much more. Refer back to these documents throughout the year to stay refreshed on our LifeWays Principles. theplaygarden.org/copy-of-parents-page

Newsletter: Our weekly newsletter is our main form of school-wide communication, so please be sure that you are receiving and reviewing weekly.

Weekly emails from your teacher: Oh these are a joy to read!

Facebook and Instagram: Please sign up for our social media (ironic since we are a low to no media school, but we've got to keep current, so here we are 😊)

Facebook:

The Playgarden by the Sea Parent Council (parents and alumni page)

The Playgarden (main page for the larger community)

Instagram:

@theplaygarden.org

Notes going home on blue bags: Keep an eye out for notes going home on your child's blue bag when we think you may be bombarded with too many emails and we want to give you a quick reminder with love.

Rhythm at Home

Media:

We are a low to no media school. Please keep the screens out of view, especially in the mornings. There are innumerable articles and research findings that support the profound impact television and media have on children's developing mind, creativity and resiliency. Need help? We have a library of resources available on many topics for check out!

Nutrition:

Please enjoy a filling breakfast low in sugar, high in love. A happy belly makes a happy child, ready to take on the day.

Sleep:

Children require at least 10 hours of sleep a night and is essential to supporting a child during the day. Stick to a clear rhythm, even during weekends.

The Nurturing Arts provide "Soul Warmth". Imagine a warm blanket hugging a child with security and a sense of goodness.

The Great Outdoors:

Reverence for nature and time engaged outside is paramount. Allowing children time to climb, dig, run, build and explore are gifts that will sustain them. We are an all weather school and will play in all sorts of weather. This is even more essential for our forest students. Your teacher will provide a detailed list of required clothing.

Rain Gear:

Please keep an eye on the weather and bring rain jackets and boots on rainy days.

Teachers will send texts if able, as a reminder.

We play in the rain and splash in the puddles barring lightning or inclement weather. We will go inside based on our Emergency Weather plan.

Warm Weather:

In the warmth of our Florida days, hydration is number one. Light clothes that breath are key. Be sure to "butter up your butter cups" with sunscreen before your child enters school on beach days.

*Remember each child must leave at school a small bottle of sunscreen and bug spray with first and last name per DCF regulations.

Cold Weather:

Warmth is essential to a child whose body is developing. Children under the age of 7 can not regulate their temperatures. When they are cold they must use some of their potential "growth" energy to heat their bodies which can affect their mood and joy. A good rule of thumb is to dress children in one more layer than you would yourself.

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing"

-someone smart said this

Circle and transition songs help weave special moments into our day. Here are a few of our favorites:

Come to Circle Song:

Let us form a ring
Dancing as we sing...

Ring-ga, Ring-ga Ariah
Ring-ga, Ring-ga Ariah
Now I turn myself
around,
Sitting down upon the
ground.
Then I stand so strong
and tall,
Ready to greet one and
all.

Morning Song:

Morning has come
Night is away
Rise with the sun
& Welcome the day.

Wash hands song:

Wash hands now,
Wash hands now,
If you want to be
nice and clean,
Bubble them up
you know what I
mean,
wash hands now

Introduction Verse:

Dolphins live in the
ocean,
Bird live in the trees,
Home is the nicest
place for a child like
me.
Let us greet our
friends today,
Let us greet our
friends
who have come to work
and play.

Festivals and Community Events

Parent Night: Fall Equinox
Fall Festival: Howell Park
Martinmas: Goldhead State Park
(First Saturday in November)
Jinglebell Tea
Winter Spiral (ages 4 and up)
Chili Cook Off
Parent Night: Spring Silent Auction
May Day
Fly Away & End of Year Picnic



Drop off and Pick Up : The Big Moment

A Confident good bye:

Your children follow your lead, so please prepare for a confident goodbye. It is often more difficult for the parent at drop off and that's okay. (Try to keep those tears away until you are out of sight!)

Follow these steps to help guide you in a successful drop off. Your teacher will provide even more insight but here are some to start:

- Get your bedtime ritual going now, it takes children a week to settle into early bedtimes.
- Provide a good breakfast
- Remove media from morning routine/rhythm or entirely, you can do it!
- Enjoy a quiet car ride (it is amazing, when you turn off the music and clutter, you just may overhear: a hum or song or maybe a question or two or three.)
- Lovingly hold your child's hand and allow them to walk to the gate or door. Carrying a child makes it very difficult for children to be put down or pried away (AH!). Set them up for success by giving them the gift of walking confidently.
- Give a quick and loving hug, and remind them you will see them after story. (This is true! As soon as story is over, we sit at our table, have a big gulp of water and dismiss each child individually to be greeted by their loved one.)
- Please talk with your teacher about special accommodations that can be made for our sweet friends who may need a little extra transition time.
- You can always call the office to check in on your wee one! We do this every year and we promise it will get better!

Pick Up:

-Please be prompt, especially for those first timers who just won't be able to wait another moment to see you. This will help build the rhythm of trust that you are in fact ready and waiting.

*PS: they can see you when you peek through the fence so resist the urge, they can feel your presence!

A decorative border of stylized green leaves in various shades (light green, medium green, and dark green) surrounds the central text area. The leaves are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern along the top, bottom, and sides of the central box.

Absences and Illness

The health of the children and caregivers is of utmost importance. Any child who is ill with an infectious or contagious condition must not be brought to school until the end of the infectious phase. If a sibling is infectious please keep all children home and contact your doctor.

If your child is ill and will not be attending that morning, please call the office, 904-241-3259. If there is some question concerning your child's state of health, it is often better to keep your child at home.

If fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea have occurred, parents must keep their child home to rest for at least 24 hours after the last occurrence.

Health and
wellbeing
are number
one!

Beach Days

Arrive in bathing suits, apply sunscreen and/or bug spray upon arrival.
Place one of our matching rash guards on child before entering please.

Bathing suits and shoes:

Flip flops with backs are best; they can get wet and children can get them on and off easily and independently. Closed shoes get sandy and scratchy for friends with sensory issues. Set them up for success with easy on, easy off shoes, no shoe laces please.

Mesh swim trunk underwear are restrictive, consider cutting out the liner.

Bathing suits: please wear a two piece which is much easier to get on and off for quick pottyng.

*If it is a new bathing suit or shoes, try them out first. Make sure they are comfortable and that children can put them on and off by themselves (we will of course help but it is best to set them up for success and comfort.)

The Playgarden, Inc. is a Non-Profit Organization guided by our Three Pillars:

Board of Director Pillar

Parents and community members, oh so busy guiding from behind the scenes. Interested in joining this dynamic team?

board@theplaygarden.org

College of Teachers Pillar

Holding the space with love and reverence for the children through play-based curriculum & guided by love. Our teachers are LifeWays Certified or working towards certification.

Administration Pillar

Always here to help our families with enrollment, finances and to offer a friendly hello.

admin@theplaygarden.org

lcruz@theplaygarden.org

cmasci@theplaygarden.org

Our Mission

To support, strengthen and inspire the growing child, family and community.

Our Vision:

A community that honors and celebrates the spirit of early childhood.

We are a LifeWays of North America Representative Site guided by Waldorf Principles



Your child is growing before your eyes. Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf Education, clearly stated that the time between birth and seven was a time of change physically and any change was expressed through a child's will and through their bodies, not their intellect.

Their intellect is not yet ready to receive seeds of academic knowledge and reasoning.

In order to lay the foundation for future academic skills, we weave the domestic arts into a nurturing home-like rhythm where children find joy in the practical and meaningful activities of daily life.

We give space for children to dive deep into their imaginative play, engage with their peers, build social and emotional skills, build resiliency in nature and just be little a little longer.

In early childhood, daily life experience is the "curriculum".

*Our parents receive 15% off LifeWays adult classes! To learn more visit
www.LifeWaysNorthAmerica.org*

As part of our Waldorf tradition, our community keeps the school thriving.
We ask that families complete 20 Volunteer hours over the school year.

Your children gain so much by seeing you at school helping to make it special.
We have many opportunities to join us throughout the year [sign up here](#): or go to theplaygarden.org<More<Parent Enrollment Documents< Volunteer Committee Sign Up.

- **Parent Council:** school support group, festival help, love
- **Maintenance Committee:** building, fixing, tinkering
- **Yearbook Committee:** collecting all of the memories
- **T-shirt Tie Dying team:** get messy! Have fun!
- **Treasures and Trinkets:** sort, sell and get first dibs on donations
- **Chili Cook Off:** Set Up, judge chili, yum
- **Green Team:** environmental effort, gardening and composting
- **Wonderful Wednesday Hosts:** Wednesdays 3:30-5:00
- **Class Parent:** Help Teacher and cheering on families to get involved
- **Steiner Book/Original Works** fundraisers: assist in sales and organize orders.
- **SILENT AUCTION TEAM:** This is our most important event of the year and we need tons of help to raise funds.

Get connected, meet new friends and have so much fun!

Volunteers Committees



The Role of the teacher:



- It is the role of the teacher to ready the soil by nourishing it. Thus making it ready for the seeds (of knowledge and intellect) to be planted.
- A child is not a bucket to pour knowledge into, a child must be nurtured to seek out knowledge in a natural way such as the seed seeks out the sun, so that when their intellect is ready to be planted and grow, they will have a hunger for it.
- Most importantly learning should fill the growing child with curiosity, purpose and a wish to reach beyond themselves.
- It is our great pleasure to be a part of your family, thank you all so much for joining us.

Our first fundraiser is our favorite. It is tie dye t-shirt time!

One of our long standing traditions is the creation of our tie dyed t-shirts for our kiddos, siblings, parents and grandparents.

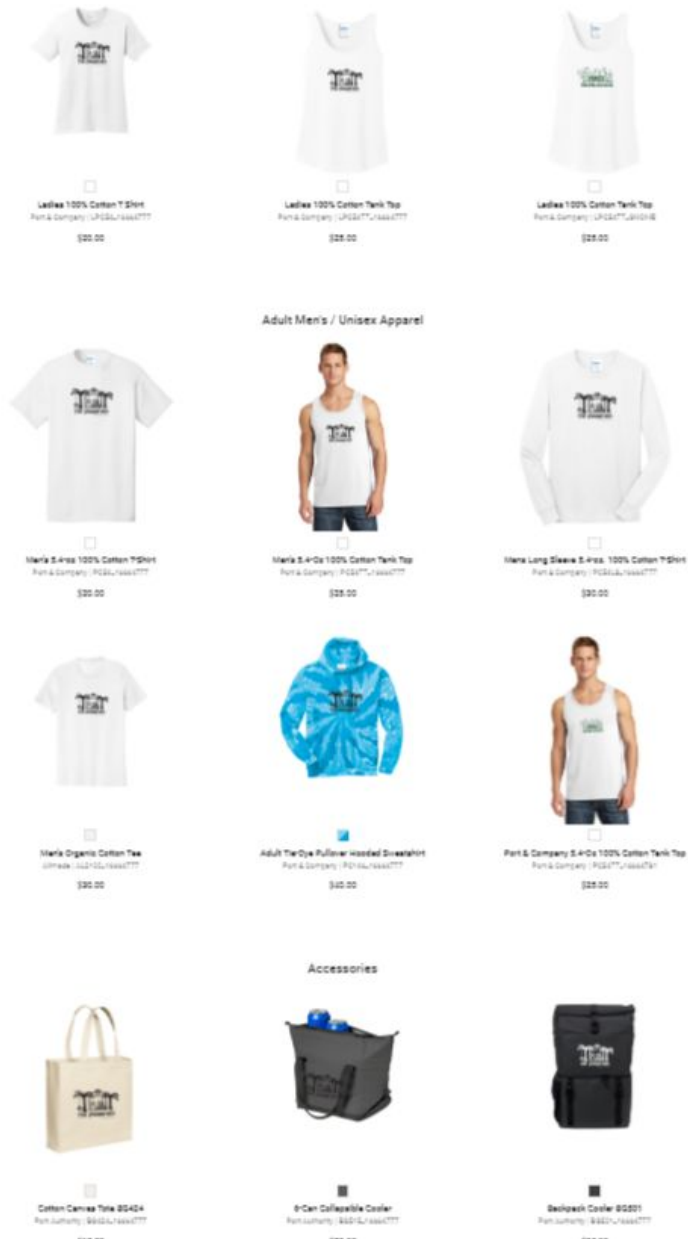
Get in on the action and place your orders The FIRST week of school.

Order TPG and FGS shirts, tanks, and gear on our website under more<parent enrollment documentation.

*Enrolled student receives one **FREE** T-shirt.

LINK:

<https://shops.stitchesandscreens.com/theplaygarden/shop/home>



To Do List

Sign and return: All links on our website

Influenza form

Distracted Driver form (must be dated in August please)

READ PARENT HANDBOOK AND RETURN Parent Handbook last page with signatures

Review your Procure information!!

Must have correct address, allergies, doctor and names, phone AND addresses for pick up list

Turn in:

School Entry Health form from your Pediatrician

Immunization Form from Pediatrician

Visit our website and familiarize yourself with our parent pages under <More

Parent Enrollment page

Parent Volunteer page

Welcome Back Friends!

We look forward to welcoming you all back to The Playgarden for another year of playing, jumping, climbing, skipping, imagining, creating, singing, dancing, exploring, engaging, growing, more growing, more singing, laughing and smiling!

Be prepared for lots of sand and mulch in shoes, favorite treasures hiding in pockets and messy evidence of a day well spend engaging at The Playgarden.

We are all here to help make your experience a magical one. Challenges and all, we are a strong community ready to support one another.

admin@theplaygarden.org 904-241-3259
www.theplaygarden.org



Welcome Back To Do List

Returning families

- Fill out our Enrollment Update form and update pick up list/address/allergies
- Reread handbook and documents for a refresher and recommitment.

All families

- Add student photograph to Procure
- Keep an eye out for emails from teachers and mark your calendar for:
 1. Home visits
 2. Parent Orientation
 3. Tea with Teacher
 4. First Day of School August 19

Read thoroughly and sign

- All Playgarden families: ParentHandbook last page
 - Forest classes also sign: Forest Manual
 - Forest Gnomeschool Families: sign FGS Handbook
- *These will be sent through Procure.

Please Read DCF Documents

- Influenza Facts
- Know Your Facility
- Distracted Drivers

*You will sign that you have read them in your Parent Handbook.



Turn in from your doctor

- School Entry Health Form (expires every 2 years)
 - Immunization Certificate or Exemption (expires yearly)
- *DCF requires that these forms be on file at the school, plan ahead for your next check up. You have 30 days from the start of school to turn them in or your child may not attend until they are turned in.

Sign Up & Read All About It

- You have been signed up for our weekly newsletter, Please read this every week along with teacher emails.
- Sign Up for our Volunteer Committees to get involved and complete your 20 hours.
- Can't attend our Parent Orientation, enjoy our virtual Back to School slideshow (but the in-person is the best!)

Tshirt Orders and Campsites

- T-shirt sales will open 8/12-9 12
- Our family campout at Goldhead State Park is Nov. 1-3. Book your campsite today in the Lakeview Loop.

