



Sprouts Garden Preschool Program Handbook

Updated March 2026

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Sprouts Garden Preschool

What is Sprouts

Sprouts Garden Preschool is a nature-based, child-led, early childhood program, housed in the Monk Botanical Gardens. This unique program facilitates play-focused, outdoor learning for children aged 3-5 in the greater Wausau community.

Sprouts Mission

Monk Botanical Gardens cultivates well-being in people, communities, and the environment with experiences that engage, educate, and inspire.

Sprouts Garden Preschool develops children's love for nature and sense of awe and wonder of the natural world, while expanding their knowledge of themselves, others, and the environment.

Sprouts Vision

Sprouts Garden Preschool will offer children and families a unique and holistic approach to early learning. Through nature-based practices, Sprouts will develop a love for the environment, their community, and each other through child-led and play-focused programming. Sprouts will begin to notice the natural world around them, gaining self-awareness and empathy for others as they experience nature, push through challenges, develop strong relationships and have an awareness of sustainability practices for their community and the natural world. Through curriculum development, and the utilization of the natural environment, we offer a holistic approach to early education; acknowledging the whole child, and meeting each child where they are when they begin attending our program.

At Sprouts Garden Preschool, students will:

- play and learn in all types of weather.
- learn to navigate appropriate risks and make decisions.
- experience teamwork and conflict, and develop social skills.
- hypothesize and experiment in nature.
- gain independence and confidence.
- climb, run, play, and learn on and off the trails within the Gardens.
- use imagination to play and engage with nature.
- participate in group and individual play and learning.

Mission, Values, & Inclusivity

Sprouts Garden Preschool operates under the mission, values, and inclusivity statement of Monk Botanical Gardens.

Mission: Monk Botanical Gardens cultivates well-being in people, communities, and the environment with experiences that engage, educate and inspire.

Values:

- Stewardship: We promote environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and the protection of our natural resources. We commit ourselves to understanding how our actions create change in the world.
- Awareness: We offer experiences to the public that inspire increased appreciation and understanding of plant communities and the relationship between these plant communities and people.
- Inclusiveness: We provide a welcoming educational garden for a diverse population; the Gardens is a place for everyone.
- Respect: We have a culture of cooperation and support among staff and volunteers working together to carry out the organization's mission.
- Excellence: We excel at innovation, creativity, collaboration, reliability, and accountability.
- Aesthetics: We provide a variety of beautiful gardens and plants that engage visitors because of their unique landscaping, design and plant selection.

Inclusivity: Monk Botanical Gardens cultivates an equitable, diverse, and inclusive culture that welcomes and respects visitors, staff, and volunteers of all backgrounds and identities. Just as our gardens and landscapes require regular care to remain biologically diverse and engaging, we continually re-examine our professional values and modify our practices to weed out barriers to being culturally diverse and inclusive.

Sprouts Contact Information

Location/Staff	Phone Number	Email
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Monk Botanical Gardens Office	715-722-4771	info@monkgardens.org
Kaytie Ruesch (Events & Programming Director)	920-359-4488 (call or text)	kruesch@monkgardens.org
Amanda Valencia (3-year-old lead teacher, Outreach Coordinator)	715-303-7476 (call or text)	avalencia@monkgardens.org
Sadie Xiong (4-year-old lead teacher)	(715) 600-1567 (call or text)	sxiong@monkgardens.org
Sabastian Yaeger (Assistant Teacher)	N/A	syaeger@monkgardens.org
Sarah Loth (Assistant Teacher)	N/A	sloth@monkgardens.org
Lauryn Rammer (Assistant Teacher)	N/A	lrammer@monkgardens.org

Address: 1901 N 4th Ave Wausau WI 54401

Licensing

Monk Botanical Gardens maintains a Day Camp license through the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (WI DCF). Day Camp licensing rules and regulations apply to Sprouts Garden Preschool and Summer Camp in the Gardens. The Day Camp License is available for families to view if interested. Our full policies and the WI DCF Day Camp Rules are available upon request.

Enrollment Process

All enrollment information and forms can be found on our [website](#).

1. Enrollment opens in February for that year's fall semester (ex: enrollment for fall 2026 opens in Feb 2026).
2. Enrollment opens for Monk Botanical Gardens members first, opening for the community a few days later.
3. Enrollment begins with submitting the enrollment application form & paying the application fee (\$30).
4. You will receive automatic confirmation emails for the application form and fee. If you do not receive the confirmations, contact us at sproutspreschool@monkgardens.org.
5. Class placement will begin in March, you will be notified of the status of your placement by 3/15.

6. A non-refundable one-month tuition deposit is due within two weeks of receiving the tuition payment link through Sawyer. This deposit is required to hold your child's place in Sprouts. This payment is your child's first month of tuition.
7. Upon completing your first tuition payment/deposit, you will complete your child's enrollment paperwork simultaneously. An immunization record can be submitted later, but must be received before school begins.

Your deposit and subsequent tuition payments are processed through a platform called Sawyer, which will allow you to choose a payment plan (one-time full payment, two installments for semester payments, or nine installments for monthly payments), and let you complete all of your child's enrollment paperwork online.

- Sawyer will charge a 3% processing fee to your full-year tuition with your child's deposit.
- You can pay by credit card or connect your bank account to your account to have payments deducted right from your account.
- Payments are processed monthly on the 15th of September through April, and payments cover your child's next month of tuition (for example: the October 15th payment covers Nov 1-Nov 30).
- You will receive an email reminder 5 days before each payment is processed.

By submitting an application for enrollment and paying the enrollment application fee, you acknowledge the following:

- I understand that the fee (\$30) is non-refundable and must accompany my child's completed enrollment application form.
- I understand that I am responsible for paying all tuition and enrollment fees and that a one-month tuition deposit payment will be due two weeks after class placement, with subsequent monthly tuition payments being due on the 15th of each month Sept-April.
- I understand that Preschool tuition is non-refundable and non-transferable.
- I understand that I do not receive refunds or adjustments in tuition for holidays, inclement weather closings, or days missed.
- I understand that a \$35.00 charge is assessed for each Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) check received.
- I understand that per Sprouts Garden Preschool's policies, my child must be fully toilet trained to attend the Preschool. By "fully toilet trained," we mean that your child must wear underpants (no pull-ups) and be able to urinate and have their bowel movement on the toilet as well as wipe themselves after. If by August 1st, my child is not completely toilet trained, I will decide to a) put my child on a waitlist in the hopes that a spot will open after they are toilet trained or b) decide to hold off and wait until the next school year. My child's \$30 application fee and one-month tuition deposit are non refundable in all cases.
- I understand that I will be notified of my child's enrollment status by email by March 15th and that if a place has not been secured, my child will be placed on a waitlist.
- I understand that should my child be accepted, I agree to complete all enrollment forms via Sawyer and pay one month's tuition within two weeks of being notified of placement.

2026-2027 Class Offerings & Tuition

The school year runs Sept 1 2026 -May 28 2027.

Class Offerings & Tuition

Class Name	Age at start of school year	# Days Per Week	Days of the Week	Times	Monthly Rate	School Year Rate
Sunflower	3	Half days 3 days a week	Mon, Wed, & Fri	8:30-11:30 am	\$380	\$3420
Clover	3	Half days 2 days a week	Tues & Thurs	8:30-11:30 am	\$270	\$2430
Barley	4	Full days 2 days a week	Tues & Thurs	8:30 am-3:30 pm	\$460	\$4140
Alfalfa	4	Full days 3 days a week	Mon, Wed, & Fri	8:30 am-3:30 pm	\$685	\$6165
Brussels	4	Full days 5 days a week	Mon-Fri	8:30 am-3:30 pm	\$1,140	\$10,260

Tuition Assistance

If you are in need of tuition assistance, you may be eligible for Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program. Follow the link for more information: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/parents>. If it is confirmed that you are not eligible for WI Shares but you still need assistance, contact Kaytie at kruesch@monkgardens.org.

Add Ons

Before care starting at 7:45am, \$5/day

After care until 4:30pm, \$8/day

Extras

We can take some to-dos off your list and provide high-quality and well-trusted rain and snow gear for your Sprout for an additional fee! The gear will be essential for your Sprout to enjoy school and stay dry through the seasons, and we are happy to order it and have it ready for your Sprout at family orientation so they start the school year with some of the most essential gear for the fall and winter seasons!

Rainsuit + waterproof boots: \$125

One-piece snowsuit: \$110

If you are interested in additional gear purchased through Sprouts or gear suggestions, please select the add-on during your class enrollment or contact us to take advantage of this option later in the school year.

Enrollment Platform: Sprouts enrollment is handled through Sawyer. Sawyer will allow you to choose a payment plan that works for you and will automate the tuition payment process so it is simple for everyone. The platform charges a 3% processing fee on the full school year's tuition on the first payment (deposit/first month tuition), but no processing fee is added on subsequent payments.

Planned Days Off

Sprouts Garden Preschool generally follows the Wausau School District calendar when it comes to planned days off of school for holiday breaks and professional development. However, Monk Botanical Gardens & Sprouts Garden Preschool recognizes some federal holidays that the school district may not. A school calendar can be found at the end of this document.

Family Expectations & Understandings

To create the best possible learning environment and provide the best role models we can for students, we ask that all families agree to the following outline of expectations and understandings.

- Respect the Gardens' rules when on the property.
- Supervise children before drop-off and after pick-up.
- Be respectful to all others you encounter on the property.

- Be enthusiastic and encourage your child to be ready to be outdoors at school.
- The preschool will include freedoms for your child, and they will be encouraged to explore, play, and evaluate risks and their abilities.
- Though we want children to be safe at all times, children may occasionally experience minor scrapes, bruises, and bumps.
- Your child will be in new social situations and may experience conflict. Preschool teachers will guide your child through these crucial learning moments. These are important developmental moments for your child.
- Read and respond (when appropriate) to all school and teacher communications, including handbooks, calendars, and emails.
- Drop off and pick up on time.
- Parents and caregivers should attend all parent-teacher conferences.
- Understand that due to the nature of our program and our nontraditional facility, we may close for inclement weather more often than the school district.

How Do Sprouts Learn?

Curriculum & Lesson Intentions

Our curriculum/lesson intentions will model all forms of learning, play, and creativity. This will include forms of fine/gross motor movement to model tactile/hands-on learning (i.e. games in the play yard to understand a concept [bats vs. owls], process art [cutting up flowers, pinecones, leaves, branches]), communication to model audio based learning (i.e. songs/dance/poetry), pictures and artwork to model visual-based learning (i.e. using the chalkboard/visual diagrams to learn about parts of an animal/plant, visuals of letters and environmental literacy).

Seasonal learning concepts will be introduced to sprouts through nature-based learning. These concepts include but are not limited to harvesting in Fall, snow and ice exploration in Winter, the water cycle in Spring, and freshwater study towards the warmer, Summer months. Other concepts will include environmental practices to promote stewardship for the earth, such as recycling, animal and plant life cycles, symbiosis, and environmental reciprocity.

Student Portfolios - Documented Learning

Lead teachers continuously monitor your sprout's growth throughout the year. Although there are no formal assessments conducted, your sprout's teacher is committed to enriching developmental learning at a pace that is child led. Our program philosophy is aligned with developing social-emotional skills, self-help skills, cognitive learning and problem-solving, fine/gross motor development, and building environmental literacy. A checklist will be included in

your sprout's portfolio and presented with photos/anecdotal notes to provide direct examples of your sprout's development in each area.

Fall and Spring parent-teacher conferences are held in October and April. Additional meetings are always welcome and can be scheduled at any time with your sprout's lead teacher.

Daily Routines

Classes begin and end each day outdoors as often as possible, and almost all other activities are outdoors unless the weather prohibits it. On the best weather days, every part of a Sprouts class day is outdoors. Snack and lunch are often eaten on the trail, at a picnic table, or in the treehouse; art and science activities are done outdoors, and all Wonder Walks are outdoors.

Certain activities may be moved indoors when the weather gets chilly and wetter (typically November-March). Snacks and lunch may be eaten indoors to allow students to take mittens or gloves off to eat more easily, and art activities that require more fine motor skills will be held indoors. At the end of the week, journal pages are also completed indoors in colder weather.

The schedule below is the routine generally followed by Sprout's classes. Teachers may adjust the schedule due to special activities or unexpected circumstances.

Half-Day Class Schedule

8:30 am	Drop-Off & Free Play
9:05 am	Circle Time
9:25 am	Wonder Walk & Story
10:05 am	Snack
10:25 am	Free Play
11:00 am	Circle Time
11:15 am	Free Play
11:30 am	Pick-Up

Full-Day Class Schedule

8:30 am	Drop-Off & Free Play
8:45 am	Circle Time
9:00 am	Wonder Walk & Story
10:00 am	Snack
11:00 am	Play yard
11:30 am	Lunch
12:00 pm	Rest, indoor learning
1:00 pm	Wonder Walk & Story
2:00 pm	Snack
2:00 pm	Play Yard
3:15 pm	Cleanup & Closing Circle
3:30 pm	Pick-Up

Friendship

Friendship is not forced. We honor decisions Sprouts make about friendships and relationships among each other. Teachers may guide conversations between Sprouts to help Sprouts understand and honor each other's words and boundaries, while still treating each other with kindness and respect. If a Sprout is hurt by a peer's decision of non-friendship, teachers will help notice those feelings and understand that everyone gets to make their own relationship decisions. Sprouts who may be struggling socially will be guided by Sprouts staff to support them in entering play and practicing early friendship skills while gaining confidence to navigate social situations on their own.

Risky Play, Weapon Play, & Stick Play

Risky Play: The Sprouts playscape is designed to provide students with opportunities to engage in physically and cognitively appropriate risky play. Some elements of risky play include height and elevation, momentum, rough-and-tumble play, and interaction with natural elements. Playing with and among sticks, logs, mud, and boulders is an important part of the Sprouts program. Each day is a science experiment. Through risky play, children develop creative problem-solving skills, gross motor skills, self-confidence, and risk-assessment abilities as they move through the natural landscape. Each student will climb and jump when, and only when, they are ready to.

Risks vs Hazards: While age-appropriate risks are good learning opportunities for students, hazards are situations in which students have no control and are always monitored and controlled by teachers. Hazards include sharp branches at eye level, dangerous weather, or large icy areas.

Weapon Play: Weapon play is developmentally appropriate for 3-5-year-old children. Weapon play lets children practice consent, and imaginative play, build confidence, practice communication, problem solve, and process emotions and the things they hear and see in the world around them.

Stick Play: Stick play is allowed and is monitored by teachers to ensure safety. Students are

able to carry and use sticks of all sizes, which helps them develop spatial awareness, gross motor skills, and teamwork when carrying and building with sticks together.

Teachers will periodically model safe play with sticks of all sizes throughout the school year to reinforce safety expectations. Supervision will increase in certain areas or during certain activities to mitigate hazards.

Dressing for Success & Gear Library

Remember: there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.

Students will spend up to 80% of each day outdoors, and more is better, so students should be dressed for the weather and messy play, wearing clothing that does not restrict movement or activities. Students should be prepared with layers that can be added and removed, no costumes, clothing special to them, or fancy clothing not designed for free outdoor play. See the recommended clothing lists below for the seasonal layers students may need.

Fall/Spring Clothing:

- Waterproof boots
- Closed-toed shoes to run and play in
- Sturdy socks
- Jacket or sweatshirt
- Rain pants and a rain jacket

Winter Clothing:

- Scarf or neck warmer
- Hat
- Knit mittens
- Waterproof mittens
- Insulated boots
- Snow pants
- Winter coat
- Wool socks

Classes begin and end each day outdoors, so students should be dropped off dressed for immediate outdoor play.

A complete change of clothes should be kept at school. You can include all items at the beginning of the year or change them out seasonally. The change of clothes should consist of socks, underwear, a top, pants, and a sweatshirt or jacket.

Students need a water bottle daily. All pieces of students' extra clothing and water bottles should

be labeled with their full names.

Gear Lending Library: Sprouts has a small but growing lending library of outdoor gear for students. The lending library is intended to be used when students need a last-minute replacement for unexpectedly wet-on-the-inside mittens, a hat forgotten in the car at dropoff, or when rain boots get filled with water. Gear from the library should be washed and returned within one week of borrowing.

While we want each family to gather their own gear for their child before the school year starts, the lending library is also available for families to borrow items for the full school year if needed. Please talk to your child's teachers or contact us at sproutspreschool@monkgardens.org if borrowing items for the full school year would be helpful for your family.

Drop-off, Pick-up, & Absences

Families should park in the parking lot at 1901 N 4th Ave. You are able to park in the small parking staff parking (closest to the yurts). Sprouts must be walked to/from the yurts to be checked in/out.

Staff will ask for identification if the adult picking up your child is not recognized. If an adult not on the approved list will pick up your child, please notify your child's teacher.

If an unauthorized adult arrives to pick up your child, staff will contact you, and your child will remain with preschool teachers or staff until you can pick up your child or you have been reached to give direct authorization for the new pick-up person.

Unexpected Absences: If your child will unexpectedly not attend class, their teachers need to know. Please contact us in one of the following ways.

1. Call or text your child's lead teacher (see the contact information section or the quick contact sheet) OR Send a message on Class Dojo.
2. Call or text Kaytie (920-359-4488).
3. Call the Gardens office (715-261-6309) **(least preferred; the office will pass along the message)**.

Absences should not be reported by email since staff may not be checking email at that time.

Snack & Lunch

All classes are peanut-free. Additional snack or meal restrictions may be implemented on a case-by-case basis depending on the known allergies of children in each class. Children are required to bring a reusable water bottle to class every day.

Because Sprouts does not provide snacks or meals, we must provide families with USDA meal program requirements for your reference. This information is available on the USDA [website](#) and will be given to you at the time of enrollment. If a child's snack does not meet the USDA nutrition standards, we will supplement so the child has a balanced snack.

Half-Day Snack Requirements (Sunflower, Clover, & Chickpea Sprouts Classes): Parents must send a snack with their child to preschool every day. Students' snacks should be able to be stored in a lunchbox with cold packs or at room temperature until snack time. Students will not share snack, and Sprouts Garden Preschool does not provide snack. Snack time will be held during the middle of the preschool day (10 am or 2 pm).

Full-Day Class Snack & Lunch Requirements (Brussels & Barley Sprouts Class): Parents must send one snack and one meal with their child to preschool every day. Both snack and lunch should be able to be stored in a lunchbox with cold packs or at room temperature until it is time to eat. Students will not share snack or lunch, and Sprouts Garden Preschool does not provide snack or lunch. Lunch is at 10:30 am, and snack is at 1:30 pm.

Holidays & Birthdays: Birthdays and half-birthday celebration treats are welcome to be brought by families. Please check with your child's teacher regarding any food allergies in your child's class.

Holidays and significant seasonal events will be acknowledged through songs, stories, snacks, or cooking. Families are welcome to share their cultural traditions with teachers and arrange ways to incorporate appropriate ways to share your family's traditions in class.

Student Behavior

Student behavior is guided by setting clear limits and rules. Expectations are made clear for daily routines and each new activity and project. All teachers model behavior expectations. Undesirable behavior is redirected to another activity, or children are given choices of acceptable activities.

If a student is upset, teachers get down on the student's level and talk to them to find the cause. Students are encouraged to express their emotions and talk through their feelings in healthy ways.

If a student chooses to remove themselves from an activity for a moment or to "take some space," teachers respect that decision, allow the student to move away from the group (but still within sight and sound), and check in with that student after 2-3 minutes if they have not chosen to rejoin the class.

If there is an unexpected incident with a student's behavior during class or if teachers notice a repeated behavior, teachers will discuss it with that student's caregivers at pick-up or by phone/email.

Additional Program Policies & Information

Behavior Guidance & Discipline Policy

Behavior Guidance: When any Sprouts student presents with challenging behavior, teaching staff follow the standards of the *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*:

- Observe the children and then identify events, activities, interactions and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior.
- Rather than focus only on eliminating the behavior, teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and the safety of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful, and provide the child with information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not.
- We will document the challenging behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a behavior tracking log.
- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held privately and focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.
- If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services, such as referrals to the educational cooperative behavioral specialist, the ADE-funded regional support network for early autism identification, community mental health center and/or a private therapist.

Discipline Policy: At Sprouts Garden Preschool, we aim to maintain a safe and orderly environment where your child can learn. We greatly emphasize encouraging appropriate behavior as we help our little learners develop self-control, self-confidence, and self-discipline. We make every effort to help children understand why some behaviors are unacceptable, and suggestions for more desirable behaviors are offered using redirection.

Our program expectations include:

1. Be safe by keeping your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

2. Be respectful and kind to others.
3. Be responsible for yourself and your play area.
4. Be a good listener—using whole-body listening.

To ensure the safety of all participants and staff, Sprouts Garden Preschool staff implement a positive discipline program. Children in our learning community are expected to follow the rules and directions of the preschool staff. The following steps are used when disciplinary action is necessary due to unacceptable behavior. Severe behavior will be addressed by the Preschool Director/Administrator.

1. Positive redirection.
2. Verbal warning for specific unacceptable behavior.
3. Separation from the group with a warning of future consequences for repeated behavior.
4. Separation from the group with a warning and write-up for repeated behavior.
5. Separation from the group with a call to parent or guardian and write-up.
6. Parent/Guardian conference to discuss corrective action and consequences for future incidents.
7. Suspension for 1 to 2 days from the program and/or the remainder of the day.
8. Repeated aggressive/inappropriate behavior with 1-3 suspensions will result in removal from the program with approval from the Preschool Lead Instructor and Administrator.

Sprouts Garden Preschool reserves the right to withdraw a participant from the program if all discipline options have been exhausted.

Discharge & Withdrawal Policy

Sprouts Garden Preschool reserves the right to disenroll a student for the following reasons.

- Failure of the parent to complete and return all required forms.
- Physical or verbal abuse of children or staff by a parent.
- Failure of the parent to observe the rules of the Preschool, including expectations outlined in the Family Handbook.
- Following reasonable efforts by the Preschool staff and the child's parents, a child may be discharged if there are behavioral or developmental concerns beyond the scope of what the Preschool can manage. This decision will be made after following the steps outlined in the Discipline Policy.

If parents decide to withdraw their child from Sprouts Garden Preschool, they must notify the Events and Programming Director in writing. Tuition is non-refundable and payments are due until your child's spot is filled by another student.

Sprout Squad Parent Volunteers

Sprout Squad is Sprout's version of a PTO, and the Squad meets monthly. The Squad's main goals include coordinating opportunities for families to gather outside of Sprouts at local parks or free/low-cost events, giving feedback and assisting when possible with Sprouts-organized family nights and showcases, and assisting with some specific fundraising events for Sprouts Garden Preschool.

Information about Sprout Squad volunteering is available at family orientation and throughout the school year. Talk to your student's teacher or email sproutspreschool@monkgardens.org for more information.

Support Services & Other Enrollments

Please inform your child's teachers of any services your child receives (speech or physical therapy, for example) or enrollments at any other preschool programs (school district or private preschool).

Knowing these significant facets of your child's day-to-day routines will help Sprouts teachers maintain continuity of care, including consistency in routines, support for students in transitions, and support of their learning and development.

Late Pick-up Policy

Sprouts Garden Preschool understands that issues may arise that cause you to be late picking up your child. If you know you will be late, please contact your child's teachers as soon as possible. Programming ends at 11:30 or 3:30 depending on class. We reserve the right to charge a late fee if you are more than 5 minutes late without notification.

Weather Policy

Sprouts Garden Preschool follows the lead of the Wausau School District when closing for weather-related emergencies and reserves the right to make additional closing determinations as needed.

As a general rule, Sprouts follows snow day closures of the Wausau School District, but Sprouts has its own cold weather closure policy, detailed below.

Cold weather decisions will always be made based on the real feel (accounting for wind chill) temperature rather than the actual temperature.

When the real feel temperature is:

- between 0 and -19 classes will spend small amounts of time outdoors, usually no more than 45 minutes.
- at -20 or colder at the start of the class time, classes will always be canceled

If a Winter Weather or Extreme Cold Warning is in effect during class time, classes will always be canceled

Teachers know their classes well, take into consideration student readiness to be outdoors in the cold, and will always use their best judgment to decide the appropriate amount of time to spend outdoors for each class.

Canceled Class Notifications: Sprouts will notify families by both email and a message on ClassDojo. We will do our best to notify you by the evening before and at the latest by 2 hours prior to your child's class start time.

Emergency Procedures

In case of all emergencies, parents will be called. All preschool staff are CPR and First Aid trained and certified.

Fire: Teachers will lead the class out the front gate of the Gardens into the center of the grass field at the corner of 1st Ave and Campus Dr and gather to wait for further instruction based on the incident. Fire drills are held monthly.

Tornado: Teachers will lead the full group of children along the fastest route to the tornado shelter on the north side of the pond. Tornado drills are held monthly May-October.

Accident or Injury: All accidents or injuries will be documented in a medical log book. Teachers will treat all minor injuries with first aid kits as needed, and in case of severe injury, 911 will be called. A parent will be notified at pick-up or contacted immediately if severe incidents occur.

Illness: If your child becomes ill at preschool, you will be contacted immediately. Your child will be removed from the group and made comfortable until you can pick them up.

Confidentiality

Staff having access to children's records will not discuss or disclose personal information regarding the children to others except to the parent(s), or other person authorized by the parent, or as authorized by law.

Sprouts Funding & Donors

Sprouts Garden Preschool is funded through tuition, grants, and donations. In some circumstances, foundations and individuals interested in donating to Sprouts do receive tours of the Sprouts campus and are guided through the space by Monk Botanical Gardens' Development Director, Executive Director, or Program Director, and sometimes are accompanied by one of the Gardens' board members. Sprouts teachers are given advance notice of tours as much as possible, and teachers let students know that they may see new adults walking through that day.

Photo & Social Media Policy

A photo release is included on the permissions form required for enrollment. On the photo release, you can accept or deny Sprouts Garden Preschool permission to take photos of your child. The photo release allows the Gardens and Sprouts Garden Preschool to use images of your child for educational and marketing purposes, including on print publications, our website, and social media. If photos of your child are used, they will never be identified by name or class.

If you post photos of Sprouts classes on social media, please:

- Do not post photos of other children without permission from their parents.
- Recognize that all posts made within all social media platforms, no matter how strict the privacy settings, should be considered part of the public domain
- Be respectful of preschool staff, families, programs, etc.

Recognize that staff and parents may have different feelings regarding social media friendships while your child is enrolled in preschool. If preschool staff deny friendships on social media, this is due to a professional decision and should not be taken personally.

Health

While we want to see your child at school as often as possible, there are times when your child should stay home.

If your child has one or more of the following, please keep them home from school.

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- A low-grade fever and acting ill
- An infectious disease
- Vomiting or upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Constant runny nose
- Continuous coughing
- Lice
- Rash

Coughs or Colds

Students will be sent home if they have continuous nasal drainage, coughing spells, or if their symptoms interfere with their ability to learn. Students may return to Sprouts as long as they are fever-free (for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication) and other symptoms are improving.

COVID: The Gardens follows the CDC's recommendations regarding COVID. Students who test positive for COVID should stay home and may return back to Sprouts once symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without medication.

Masks: Students and staff can choose to wear masks to Sprouts and will be supported in their choice. Staff will respect the wishes of caregivers who request that their student wear a mask during the full Sprouts session or indoors only. If a Sprout is wearing a mask indoors, at least one teacher will wear a mask as well to ensure that the child does not feel singled out.

Masks are not currently required indoors or outdoors at Sprouts. The Sprouts Preschool program reserves the right to implement a mask policy depending on community COVID levels.

Preventing the Spread of Illness: To do our part in preventing the spread of communicable diseases, staff and students will participate in the following good hygiene practices.

Students will wash their hands:

- When arriving at school
- Before and after eating
- After any contact with wild animals or insects
- After using the restroom
- After sneezing and/or blowing their nose
- When hands appear dirty
- When entering the classroom after being outdoors

Staff will wash their hands:

- When arriving at school
- Before and after eating
- After any contact with wild animals or insects
- Before and after giving first aid
- Before and after administering medication
- After using the restroom
- After sneezing and/or blowing their nose
- When hands appear dirty
- When entering the classroom after being outdoors

Staff will wear gloves when giving first aid or when administering medication. Gloves are single-use and will be disposed of after use.

If your child has been exposed to another student who has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, we will let your family know.

Plants & Animals

Students will play off the trails within the Gardens' property. While playing and learning at the Gardens, children may encounter plants such as poison ivy, stinging nettles, other thorny plants, mosquitoes, bees, hornets, other stinging or biting insects, and different types of ticks.

All of these are a part of nature, and students will learn about them, and staff will guide students in identifying them as they're playing and learning. Appropriate dress is one way to help avoid uncomfortable encounters with plants and insects.

In the situation that your child comes into contact with any hazardous plants or insects, staff will contact you immediately if it is an emergency (bee sting) or will inform you at pick-up if it was a minor incident (ran through poison ivy with long pants on).

Find Poison Ivy information here:

- <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/poison-ivy/>

Find tick information here:

- https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html
- <https://wisconsin-ticks.russell.wisc.edu/tick-identification-for-public-health-and-medical-professionals/>

Students may come in contact with wild animals while at the Gardens, including turtles, frogs, toads, and snakes. Students may have the opportunity to catch frogs and toads, whereas turtles and snakes may be caught by staff and held while students can touch them safely.

Staff and students will wash their hands after touching any wild animal.

Waterfront Activities

The Gardens' property includes a small pond, which is often used by Sprouts Preschool.

When interacting with the water, students may stand at the water's edge and engage in frog catching using their hands or nets and collecting insects and plants to take to shore to look at more closely.

Two adults will always be present if students are interacting with the water.

Sprouts Garden Preschool may make edits to the parent handbook and

Preschool policies as necessary. Updates will be added to the website, and any enrolled families will be notified.