



Sprouts Garden Preschool
Program Handbook
Updated July 2026

Sprouts Garden Preschool	2
About Sprouts	2
Land Acknowledgement, Values & Inclusivity	3
Sprouts Contact Information	3
Licensing	4
Enrollment Process	4
2026-2027 Class Offerings, Add-ons, & Tuition	5
Family Expectations & Understandings	8
How Do Sprouts Learn?	8
Curriculum & Lesson Intentions	8
Student Portfolios - Documented Learning	9
Daily Routines	9
Risky Play, Weapon Play, & Stick Play	10
Dressing for Success & Gear Library	11
Drop-off, Pick-up, & Absences	12
Snack & Lunch	12
Student Behavior	13
Additional Program Policies & Information	14
Behavior Guidance & Discipline Policy	14
Discharge & Withdrawal Policy	15
Sprout Squad Parent Volunteers	16
Support Services & Other Enrollments	16
Late Pick-up Policy	16
Weather Policy	16
Emergency Procedures	17
Confidentiality	17
Sprouts Funding & Donors	18

Photo & Social Media Policy	18
Health	18
Plants & Animals	20
Waterfront Activities	21

Sprouts Garden Preschool

What is Sprouts Garden Preschool?

Sprouts Garden Preschool is a nature-based early childhood program housed in the Monk Botanical Gardens. Priding ourselves on outdoor learning, we hold play, joy, and nature are at the core of our philosophy.

Monk Botanical Gardens Mission:

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

Sprouts Mission

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

Sprouts Vision

Sprouts Garden Preschool offers children and families a unique and holistic approach to early learning. A seasonal curriculum allows children to experience nature first hand, with lesson intentions and play invitations to encourage exploration, joy, and wonder. Foundational practices meet children across all developmental stages, scaffolding progress at the individual level. It is the goal of Sprouts Garden Preschool to make life-long lovers of learning, nature, and their community.

At Sprouts Garden Preschool, children 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.

Land Acknowledgement, Values & Inclusivity

Land Acknowledgement

At Sprouts Garden Preschool, we acknowledge we sit on the ancestral land of the Anishinaabe. It is our responsibility to uphold and respect land traditions of the first nations people. Through our lesson intentions and community engagement, we incorporate practices which honor the land and the Anishinaabe. Recognizing we may falter in our approach, we use humility to learn more and better our practices, and ourselves.

Sprouts Garden Preschool Values

- **Child-Led** - Sprouts have the freedom to explore their curiosities while discovering the natural world around them. Staff encourage children's autonomy, and follow their lead to further learning and wonder. Child-led opportunities expand learning and skill building at the individual level, while furthering whole group learning at the community level.
- **Play-Focused** - Play is at the core of learning. By giving children the opportunity to expand their learning in a free play environment, Sprouts Garden Preschool expands learning holistically. Offering play opportunities to create art and music, to build, to interact with beautiful literature and scientific texts, and to move their bodies across terrains, we are building a holistic skill set through play.
- **Environmental Literacy** - We develop environmental literacy through curated lesson intentions. Our unique outdoor space and access to garden spaces allow for exploration of the natural world. When children learn to love nature they are more likely to grow up and protect it.
- **Resilience** - Sprouts will gain confidence, persistence, and grit as they regularly engage in challenging physical and social experiences. From climbing trees to navigating conflict in early friendships, Sprouts will overcome challenges, meeting them head on.
- **Community** - Community is at the foundation of our program structure. Introducing the concept of community begins with families, and expands into the classroom. As Sprouts develop awareness and appreciation for the natural world and their community, they will be better equipped to advocate for all people and the environment.

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
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 (Sprouts Program Director, 3 year old lead teacher)	715-303-7476 (call or text)	avalencia@monkgardens.org
Sadie Xiong (Mixed aged 3-5 year old lead teacher)	(715) 600-1567 (call or text)	sxiong@monkgardens.org
Lauryn Rammer (4 year old lead teacher)	(715) 575-5885 (call or text)	lrammer@monkgardens.org
Sarah Loth (Assistant teacher)	N/A	sloth@monkgardens.org
Beth Grefe (Assistant teacher)	N/A	bgrefe@monkgardens.org
Claire Wisniewski (Assistant teacher)	N/A	cwisniewski@monkgarens.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](#).

Steps to Take - Enrollment:

1. Enrollment opens in February for that year's fall semester (ex: enrollment for Fall 2027 opens in Feb 2027).
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 and 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.

Sawyer:

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.

Submitting Application - Terms and Conditions:

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), notify educators of when they need to use the bathroom, and be able to urinate and have their bowel movement on the toilet, including attempting

to wipe independently. 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	830 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 and After Care:

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

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

Gear Loan:

We can take some to-dos off your list and provide high-quality and well-trusted rain and snow gear for your Sprout! 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! **The last day to order is by August 1st of the current school year.**

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.

Planned Days Off

Sprouts Garden Preschool generally follows the Wausau School District calendar when it comes to holiday breaks and staff professional development. However, Monk Botanical Gardens and Sprouts Garden Preschool recognizes 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 Sprouts, 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.
- Drop off and pick up on time.
- Be respectful to all others you encounter on the property.
- Be enthusiastic and encourage your child to be ready to be outdoors at school.
- Understand your child is likely to play in mud, as a result of messy play. Your child is likely to be muddy when you pick them up from school during rainy seasons.
- 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. Educators 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 educator communications, including handbooks, calendars, and emails.
- Caregivers should attend all family connections scheduled in October and April.
- 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

Emergent Environmental Education: Our lesson intentions model all forms of learning, play, and creativity. The role of nature will further develop our routine, structures, and intentions. This will include:

- **Motor movement:** to model tactile/hands-on learning
- **Process art:** artwork to model visual-based learning
- **Communication:** to model audio-based learning
- **Formal literacy:** to model reading and writing forms of learning
- **Environmental Literacy:** to introduce seasonal learning concepts through nature based learning.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** includes environmental practices to promote stewardship for the earth
- **Outdoor Learning:** Natural Start Alliance states, “nature-based early education programs serve young children, and combine elements of both early childhood education and environmental education to develop environmental literacy, a sense of place, care and concern for the natural world” (page 9). Our program strongly emphasizes the natural world, and most of our learning will be held outdoors.

Student Portfolios - Documented Learning

Each Sprout has two different documents outlining developmental progress. One at the beginning of the school year for a Fall Family Connection held in October, and the other for a Spring Celebration of Learning held in April. Portfolios are built by our own philosophy guidelines and the Wisconsin Models for Early Learning.

Fall Family Connections

At the start of the school year, Educators are expected to have a basic understanding of a Sprouts strengths and needs for growth. The holistic approach is used, such that the Educator outlines skills in social emotional learning, functional academics, environmental education, and motor development. This document is a quick snapshot highlighting play skills, social awareness, self-awareness, following directions, early literacy, early numeracy, fine motor skills, and large motor skills. Evidence used to support skills can be anecdotal or a physical representation of the skills observed (drawings, photos, etc.).

Spring Celebration of Learning

Educators will have at least 8 Moments of Learning documents (one for every month of the school year September-April, and two for every developmental area), relating to a developmental area: social emotional learning, functional academics, environmental education, and motor development. These documents will highlight a specific skill observed in the above areas, and will be presented to parents in the Spring. In addition to the Moments of Learning documents, Educators will expand on the developmental areas mentioned using the Partnering with Nature in Early Childhood (PNEC) assessment documents. The PNEC assessment documents go in depth about each developmental area, and highlight other skills demonstrated. These include:

- Social Emotional Learning: Curiosity; Emotional Development; Social Development; Independence; Sense of Community; Sense of Place; Peace; Spiritual Development
- Environmental Education: Environmental Connection; Environmental Literacy
- Functional Academics: Rules and Routines; Engagement; Reading; Writing; Communication; Mathematical Thinking; Scientific Thinking; Aesthetic Development;
- Motor Development: Large Motor Skills; Fine Motor Skills

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. Snacks and lunch are often eaten outdoors, or picnic style across the garden spaces. Lessons and activities are held outdoors to further emphasize how anywhere can be a classroom. Activities and meal times may be moved indoors when the weather gets chilly and wetter (typically November-March) to allow Sprouts to learn and eat comfortably. Even on days when meals or activities are held indoors, there is still ample time spent outdoors for free play and for wonder walks.

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		Full-Day Class Schedule	
8:30 am	Drop off & Free Play	8:30 am	Drop-Off & Free Play
9:00 am	Circle Time	9:00 am	Circle Time
9:15 am	Wonder Walk	9:15 am	Snack
10:15 am	Snack	9:45 am	Wonder Walk
10:45 am	Lesson & Free Play	10:45 am	Lesson & Free Play
11:15 am	Circle Time	12:00 pm	Lunch
11:30 am	Pick-Up	12:30 pm	Rest & Lesson
		1:30 pm	Wonder Walk
		2:00 pm	Snack
		2:30 pm	Lesson & Free Play
		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 amongst each other. Educators will guide conversations with kindness and respect at the forefront. Peer decisions of friendship or non-friendship will be met with grace, and explained using validating language. Sprouts who may be struggling socially will be guided by Educators 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, imaginative play, build confidence, practice communication, problem solve, and process emotions about 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 gear.

Gear expectations and recommendations:

Sprouts typically spend 80% of the school year outdoors, with some days never utilizing indoor spaces. The appropriate gear makes their days smoother and more comfortable. Sprouts should be prepared with layers that can be added and removed. Classes begin and end each day outdoors, so students should be dropped off dressed for immediate outdoor play. Costumes or fancy clothing not designed for free outdoor play are not practical to wear in our play environment. See the recommended clothing lists below for the seasonal items students may need.

Rainy seasons:

- Waterproof boots
- Rain jacket & rain pants, or rainsuit
- Rain gloves
- Sweater or light jacket as added warmth
- Quick dry base layers

Warmer seasons:

- Closed-toe shoes to run and play in
- Shorts or light pants
- T-shirts or tank tops
- Light jackets
- Sun hat

Colder seasons:

- Winter jacket and snow pants, or snowsuit
- Mittens and liner gloves
- Wool base layers

- Winter boots
- Winter hat
- Thick sweater for added warmth
- Balaclava or fleece neck warmer

A complete change of clothes should be kept at school. Clothing kept at school will be swapped out as the seasons change. The complete change of clothes should consist of socks, underwear, a top, pants, and a sweatshirt or jacket. All clothing and personal items, including snack items, should be labeled with your child's name.

Gear Lending Library

Sprouts has a lending library of outdoor gear for students, including extra seasonally appropriate clothing. 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.

Drop-off, Pick-up, & Absences

Families should park in the parking lot at 1901 N 4th Ave. There is a designated Sprouts Parking Lot sign. 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 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. Snack time will be held during the middle of the preschool day, approximately 10:15AM.

Full-Day Class Snack & Lunch Requirements (Brussels, Barley, & Alfalfa Sprouts Class): Parents must send two snacks 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 snacks or lunch, and Sprouts Garden Preschool does not provide snacks or lunch. Meal times are approximately held at 9:15AM, 12:00PM, and 2:00PM.

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. Educators model behavior expectations. Unexpected behavior is redirected to another activity, or children are given choices of alternative activities.

If a Sprout is upset, Educators get down on their level and talk to them to find the cause. Sprouts are encouraged to express their emotions and talk through their feelings in healthy ways.

If a Sprout chooses to remove themselves from an activity for a moment or to "take some space," Educators 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 group.

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

Supporting Child Behavior: At times, children experience distress when in a new environment or have difficulty responding to unfamiliar adults and situations. The following strategies will be taken by educators to support children when they are distressed.

- Educators will sit and wait with the child until they are ready to participate, using minimal talking in order for the child to regulate their emotions without overstimulating language or environment
- Educators will comfort the child by hugging them gently, using soothing language, and validating their feelings
- To prevent the child from eloping from an area, (i.e. chasing down a caregiver), educators will hold the child from running until they are able to stand on their own without running. While the educator is holding the child, they will use validating language, such as: "I know you feel sad", "they will come back to get you at the end of the day", "we're going to have a good day".

If the child is unable to participate or regulate their emotions after 30 minutes, educators will use their best judgement to contact the parents/caregivers for an early pick up. It is important Sprouts Garden Preschool is a place of safety and security, and is not creating traumatizing experiences for children. When a child is picked up early, the educator will describe the soothing techniques used, ask the parent what helps the child calm down at home, and come up with a plan for tomorrow to promote full-day attendance.

If parents are unable to be reached, educators will do their best to comfort the child and build trust amongst each other.

Once a child is regulated and able to participate in activities and play, educators will do their best to connect with the parents/caregivers to give them a positive update on how their child is doing.

Behavior Guidance: When any Sprouts student presents with challenging behavior, Educators 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 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 behavioral development.
- Teaching staff shall respond to 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 expected behavior and what is not.
- We will document unexpected behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a behavior tracking log.
- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's choices 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 an 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 comfortable environment where your child can learn. We greatly encourage community and safety expectations as we help our little learners develop self awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and positive engagement in a community. We make every effort to help children understand why some behaviors are hurtful by suggesting behaviors which are helpful 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. Stopping when a teacher says stop, especially when figuring out play patterns and during wonder walks throughout the gardens.

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 unexpected behavior. Severe behavior will be addressed by the Preschool Director/Administrator.

1. Positive redirection.
2. Verbal warning for specific unexpected behavior.

3. Separation from the group with a warning of future consequences for repeated behavior, still within sight and sound of the group.
4. Separation from the group with a warning and write-up for repeated behavior, still within sight and sound of the group.
5. Separation from the group with a call to parent or guardian and write-up, still within sight and sound of the group.
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 in order for a plan to be developed to support child's development.
8. Repeated aggressive/inappropriate behavior with 1-3 suspensions will result in removal from the program with approval from the Preschool Program Director and Events and Programming Director.

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 or enrollments at any other preschool programs. Knowing these significant facets of your child's day-to-day routines will help educators maintain continuity of care, including consistency in routines, support for students in transitions, and support of their learning and development.

Late Pick-up Policy

We understand life happens, and if you are running late or need to drop off early, please reach out to your child's teacher via Class Dojo or text. Special circumstances and unexpected events will not be charged for before or after care. Consistent use of before or after care (more than 3 times in a year) without proper enrollment will result in charges.

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 be completed indoors
- 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. Sprouts Garden Preschool uses Accuweather to determine closures and "real feel" temperatures.

Educators 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: Educators will lead the class out through the service driveway 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: Educators 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. Educators 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' Events and Programming Director, or Sprouts Garden Preschool - Program Director, and sometimes are accompanied by one of the Gardens' board members. Sprouts educators are given advance notice of tours as much as possible, and 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.

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 educators 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, educators 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 educators 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.

While at the pond, children will use nets to catch frogs, insects, or plants at the water's edge. Nature observations will take place away from the water's edge.

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.