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Welcome!

Thank you for enrolling your child in Hartley Nature Preschool!

Hartley Nature Preschool (HNP) focuses on free play outdoors in all seasons and all weather. We believe that nature is children’s natural habitat and that children learn and grow the best through time and experiences outdoors. Our curriculum is seasonal and place-based, taking into account what is happening in the woods and waters of Hartley Park and what the children are interested in. Your child will spend as much time as possible each preschool session playing outside in all seasons and all weather while building relationships with other children and with HNP’s professional and nurturing staff.

HNP offers experiences typically found in every quality preschool program including child-directed learning through play, chances to explore and learn with all of the senses, large and small motor activities, and chances to create art, make friends, and develop social skills. But, HNP does all of these things, and more, in the context of the natural world! Your child will be busy learning about cooperation while building a snow fort under the pines, learning about colors while playing in the crisp fall leaves, and developing coordination and balance by climbing on logs and stumps, among many other activities.

We hope this Parent Handbook provides you with the information you need for our preschool classes; please hold on to this handbook as a reference for the preschool year ahead and share it with your child’s other caregivers who will bring them to and from HNP. We look forward to welcoming your family to Hartley Nature Preschool! Please feel free to contact HNP staff with any questions and/or concerns about what your child will experience at HNP or about the enrollment process.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Erpestad
Preschool Director

Mission

Hartley Nature Preschool’s mission is to inspire life-long connections with nature through education, play, and exploration while supporting the whole child’s development and preparing children for school.

This mission builds directly off of, and supports, Hartley Nature Center’s Mission. Hartley Nature Center is dedicated to inspiring life-long connections with nature through education, play, and exploration.

Educational Philosophy

Nature Preschool

We are proud to be a nature preschool! As a child care center we are licensed by the MN Department of Human Services under Rule 3. As a nature preschool our program focuses on:

- Going outside every day in seasons
- Child-directed free play
- Child-directed, adult-supported activities
- Seasonal, place-based curriculum
- Whole-child development (definition from Green Hearts, Inc.)

We learn about what the children are interested in, with a special focus on what is happening in the natural world of Hartley Park. Children learn best through play indoors and outside. Thematic classroom activities indoors invite children to learn in hands-on, playful, and exploratory ways. Outdoors, we have the 660 acres of Hartley Park to learn in, from, and about. Nature is children’s natural habitat. Time in the natural world is critical for children’s healthy development and supports children’s social, emotional, cognitive, and intellectual development. We believe that everything children do both indoors and outside at preschool supports children’s readiness for life and for school. For example, while making mud pies children develop self-regulation and problem-solving skills, practice communicating with other children, use their creativity, and use symbols. Climbing trees...
allows children chances to assess and take appropriate risks, build strength, stamina, balance, and coordination, problem-solve, and practice self-regulation.

Staff
Our talented staff is experienced in both early childhood and environmental education and they are passionate about nature-based education and the HNP mission. Our teacher to student ratio is 1:8, which allows educators to provide maximum support during our learning adventures. All staff members meet the state requirements as lead or assistant teachers, pass a background check, are certified in CPR and first aid, and participate in a variety of program trainings and staff development opportunities annually.

Kaitlin Erpestad—Preschool Director and Co-Lead Teacher, Tues/Thurs AM and PM
I grew up exploring the parks, lake shore, and green spaces of Duluth and learning to ski on the ski trails of Hartley Park. I earned a BA in Social Studies Education and a MN teaching license for K-6 elementary and 5-8 social studies from St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. I then had the pleasure of living in the country of Finland for three years where I taught preschool for 3-7 year old Finnish and international children and explored the Finnish woods with my husband, Matti. I returned to MN and completed a naturalist training program at Wolf Ridge ELC and earned a Master’s degree in Environmental Education from UMD. I love to be active outside in all seasons with my twin boys and baby girl and, when life as a busy mom allows, to get out on the trails of Duluth to bike, ski, and run, to paddle on the Lake and enjoy time on the beaches, to drink a hot cup of coffee, and to eat chocolate!

Maria Hopkins—Assistant Preschool Director and Co-Lead Teacher, Mon/Wed/Fri AM and Tues/Thurs AM
Growing up in South Dakota, I always enjoyed being outdoors and exploring my surrounding environment, which is why I chose to study biology as an undergraduate in Minnesota. After college, I began to pursue outdoor education, which sparked my interest and passion for teaching children and engaging them with nature. In December 2011, I earned my M.Ed. and K-6 teaching license,
with a focus in environmental education, from Antioch University New England. After receiving my degree, I worked for a Nature Explore Classroom in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. After living in New England for several years, I began to really miss the Midwest, so my husband and I decided to move to Duluth! I have loved being here and working as a teacher at Hartley Nature Preschool. When I’m not taking children out into the woods of Hartley, I enjoy snuggling with my daughter, hiking, camping, cooking, and eating ice cream!

**Marina Reese—Assistant Teacher, Mon/Wed/Fri AM**

Growing up in Minnesota, I cultivated a desire to explore and learn through the outdoors. Though my undergrads are in psychology and cognitive science, I have spent the last 4 years teaching and guiding in the outdoors and on campus for UMD. This time at UMD has included a wide variety of topics with a heavy focus on rock climbing and all types of paddling. I love and appreciate working with all ages, however, my internship with Hartley last year solidified that my passions truly lie with our little ones. When I am not at Hartley you can find me climbing around the north shore and all around the country, surfing Lake Superior, painting, and continuing my education. I look forward to sharing my love for the outdoors and all it can offer with our preschoolers while making memories that will last a lifetime.

**Caitlin Neff—Co-Lead Teacher, Tues/Thurs Full Day**

I have always loved exploring the natural world and learning as much as I can about it! It wasn’t until I attended the University of Minnesota Duluth that I realized how much I enjoy teaching about our natural world and introducing children to its many wonders, which is why I obtained a degree in Outdoor Education. Before joining the Hartley Preschool family, I worked at Wolf Ridge ELC, Deep Portage Learning Center, and Aspen Center for Environmental Studies. I also recently earned my K-6 Teaching License and Masters of Education from the College of St. Scholastica. When I am not at Hartley you can find me exploring the woods with my husband, son, and dog, mountain biking, cross country skiing, and creating things in the kitchen.
Emma Richtman—Co-Lead Teacher, Tues/Thurs Full Day

As a native Minnesotan, I’ve spent much of my life enjoying and exploring ‘The Land of 10,000 Lakes’. I hold a BS in Fisheries and Wildlife Management from the U of MN Twin Cities, and a MN teaching license for K-6 elementary from The College of St. Scholastica. In 2015, my husband and I moved to Duluth, into our forever family home, which we are slowly remodeling. As a family, we love adventuring outdoors with our young daughter and yellow lab. When time allows, I love bird watching, agate picking, hiking, cycling, camping, cooking, boating, hangin’ with my chickens, jammin’ on my uke, and singing children's folk tunes. I could not be happier at Hartley and I look forward to creating many great memories with your children!

Jen Buseman—Co-Lead Teacher, Full Day Mon/Wed

I grew up in Southwestern Minnesota enjoying spending as much time as possible in the water and canoeing on the Minnesota River. Moving to Duluth allowed me to explore and learn about the natural world and led me to pursue a career in teaching. I earned a degree in Outdoor Education from UMD and recently became licensed in Elementary Education. After a year of teaching science a Piedmont Elementary School, I am excited and honored to once again be a part of the Hartley Preschool team! This is going to be a fantastic year!

Becca Bell—Co-Lead Teacher, Full Day Mon/Wed and Friday Morning Class

Returning to Hartley, returning home. After working two years (2016-2018) at Hartley Nature Preschool, I took a year to expand my horizons. I spent the 2018-2019 school year just north of San Francisco, California. As a lead teacher for a preschool through the Parks & Recreation Department, I got to experience a different climate - both environmentally and professionally. Though the amount of sunshine is hard to beat, Minnesota’s natural world will always be home. It is this renewed sense of understanding and love for the Midwest I want to bring to the students of Hartley. When not working, I can be found roaming the trails with my beloved dog, Juni, or visiting my two nephews Chicago.
I look forward to spending another year exploring our marvelous Minnesota home with your preschooler!

**Carley Cohen—Lead Teacher, Mon/Wed PM and Friday Morning Class**

I grew up hiking, running, skiing and playing on the trails of Chester Bowl here in Duluth. The time I spent there as a child and young adult, teaching ski lessons and working as a camp counselor, led me to pursue my degrees in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education at Winona State University, Winona MN. It was during college that I found my love for adventure. I studied abroad in Italy and completed my student teaching on the island of St. Lucia. I got my start teaching briefly in Minnesota then moved on to teach in California, Rhode Island and Hawaii as my husband continued his service in the US Navy. After seven years and many adventures my husband and I decided to return home to Duluth to raise our family and give our time to the community we love so much. We enjoy being outside in all seasons and look forward to the what each new day brings. I am excited and honored to join the wonderful Hartley family and looking forward to seeing you on the trail!

**Frank Fairchild—Assistant Teacher, Mon/Wed PM and Tues/Thurs PM**

After studying environmental outdoor education at UMD I am excited to be putting my collegiate knowledge to practical use as a teacher at Hartley Nature Preschool for a second year! It is very important that people follow their own excitement and initiative. The preschoolers do this wonderfully through play! Other introductory things about me... I like the color of a crisp sunrise, described as a subtle pink orange. I stretch to stay nimble for games that I play: frisbee, paddling, freerunning or acting on a make-believe stage (D&D). These aspects were with me since I was a wee lad: love to make friends, love to be glad, eager to explore, want all the time I can have. The landscapes of Duluth are fun and engaging. I love to watch water after rain when it’s raging. Often times my excitement for life pulls every which way. Now, preschool pulls me every day. I’m glad to meet you all! Happy to be here in the place that I am.
History and Facility

HNP is a program of Hartley Nature Center and is located in the Nature Center building. Hartley provides the perfect place for nature-based learning: our green building is family-friendly and the wonderful woods, ponds, and trails of Hartley Park are an ideal setting for exploration, play, and learning.

The Nature Center is located in the 660 acres of Hartley Park, which is owned by the City of Duluth. HNC leases and operates the Nature Center facility and surrounding outdoor campus from the City of Duluth. HNC is a 501 (C) 3 non-profit funded through memberships, user fees, grants, and gifts from individuals, foundations, and organizations. HNC averages 25,000+ visitors annually of which over 12,000 are students on K-12 field trips, summer camp participants, and nature preschoolers. The HNC facility was completed in the summer of 2003. The $2.8 million project was funded with state, county, and city contributions along with nearly $1 million raised by Hartley Nature Center.

The idea for a preschool at Hartley has been around since 2010. A task force composed of HNC board members and staff and community members was created in 2013 to bring the recommendations from a 2012 feasibility study to life. After being licensed, the preschool opened in September 2014 with half day classes. A full day classroom was added in fall 2016.

There are currently two preschool classrooms at Hartley Nature Center and the classrooms are carefully prepared and equipped to meet the developmental needs of 3-5 year old children through a variety of interest areas and materials. In addition to facilities and furnishings for eating, washing, learning, and playing, great care is taken to provide ample amounts of natural light. The restrooms are located in the main space of Hartley Nature Center across from the office’s main desk and children are always supervised while using the restroom facilities. The preschool classrooms are secure spaces and require key or keycard access. Visitors and members of the public are unable to enter the classroom without receiving permission due to the secured doors.
Child Care Program Plan
HNP has a written Child Care Program Plan included in this handbook. The Preschool Director sees that the Child Care Program Plan is carried out and reviews the plan annually. It is the policy and practice at HNP that all children are supervised by an approved staff person at all times, meaning that a child is always within sight and hearing of a staff person. Your child is your responsibility before they are signed in and after they are signed out each session on the sign-in/sign-out form located in the preschool classroom.

HNP is an equal opportunity employer and educator. HNP offers a non-sexist, non-racist, multicultural curriculum and environment and does not discriminate against staff, parents/guardians, or children on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity and expression, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, income, status in regards to public assistance, religion/spirituality, language, physical or mental abilities, or veteran status. HNP promotes an inclusive, welcoming, and safe environment in part by representing many different kinds of families within the curriculum, decorations, books, toys, activities, and teaching materials in the classroom, providing opportunities for children to experiences different cultural activities and to ask questions, and not celebrating any particular culture’s holidays.

Throughout this document the term parent/guardian is used, however it is understood that a caregiver such as a nanny, babysitter, grandparent, or other adult may accompany your child to/from HNP and/or may be the child’s primary caregiver. Please share this information with all of your child’s caregivers as it is a valuable resource for all of the caregivers who will be involved in your child’s preschool experience so everyone knows what to expect from your child’s time at HNP.

Ages and Numbers Served
HNP serves preschool aged children. The MN Department of Health and Human Services in Chapter 9503.0005 defines a preschooler as a child who is at least 33 months old and who has not yet attended the first day of kindergarten. To enroll in HNP, children must be toilet trained and 3 years old by September 1st of the year in which they will enroll.
HNP generally has up to 32 enrolled children on site at any given time. Half day classes have 16 children and two teachers. Half day classes do not overlap. There are 14 children in each full day class with two teachers. The MN State minimum staff to child ratio for preschool aged children is one staff member to 10 children (1:10). In order to support our outdoor play and exploration HNP maintains a ratio of one teacher to eight or fewer children in each classroom. Volunteers are not counted in the ratio.

**Yearly Schedule**

HNP is open from the Tuesday following Labor Day to the last weekday of May. HNP is closed on federal holidays including Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day, and Memorial Day. HNP is also closed for the Duluth Public Schools’ holiday, winter, and spring break weeks. Families receive the yearly calendar with enrollment materials. These days are considered to be part of the scheduled billing and are included in tuition fees. HNP does not operate in the summer months. However, summer camp and parent-child nature programs for preschool aged children are available at Hartley during the summer months.

**Days and Hours of Operation**

HNP is open Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:30-4:30. HNP is closed when the Duluth Public Schools (ISD #709) close due to severe weather (see the Weather Emergency Closings section for more information). HNP offers morning sessions from 8:30-11:30 and afternoon sessions from 12:30-3:30 and full day sessions from 8:30 am-4:30 pm. HNP is a nine month program and requires a commitment for the entire school year. The following sessions will be offered this school year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days of the Week</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Monthly Tuition</th>
<th>Yearly Tuition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday/Wednesday/Friday</td>
<td>8:30 am-11:30 am</td>
<td>3—5 year olds</td>
<td>$294</td>
<td>$2,646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday/Thursday</td>
<td>8:30 am-11:30 am</td>
<td>3—young 4 year olds</td>
<td>$197</td>
<td>$1,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday/Wednesday</td>
<td>12:30 pm-3:30 pm</td>
<td>3—5 year olds</td>
<td>$197</td>
<td>$1,773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>3—5 year olds</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday/Thursday</td>
<td>12:30 pm–3:30 pm</td>
<td>$197</td>
<td>$1,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday/Wednesday</td>
<td>8:30 am–4:30 pm</td>
<td>$343</td>
<td>$3,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday/Thursday</td>
<td>8:30 am–4:30 pm</td>
<td>$343</td>
<td>$3,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Morning Class</td>
<td>8:30 am—12:30 pm</td>
<td>$94</td>
<td>$846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Program Enrollment**

HNP does not discriminate in admission on the basis of gender, race, religion, creed, national origin, disability, or source of payment. There are no geographical boundaries for enrollment to HNP. HNP accepts children with special needs when, in the opinion of staff, parents, and, if necessary, appropriate professionals, those needs can be met by our program.

**Required Enrollment Forms**

An enrollment packet will be mailed to you in the spring and includes program information required by State of MN licensing regulations.

*Before the first day of school ALL children must have the following documents completed and submitted:*

- Hartley Nature Center Membership
- Emergency Information Sheet
- Allergy Action Plan (ICCP), required for ALL mild and severe allergies
- Payment Option Form
- *For those eating lunch at Hartley: Lunch Beverage Permission Form*
- Immunization History (new children only, unless there are updates to a returning child’s record)
- Health Care Summary (new children only, unless there are updates to a returning child’s record)
Enrollment Information Form, including:
  - Dietary and Medical Needs
  - Animal and Pet Permission
  - Observation Permission
  - Information Release
  - Photo/Video Permission
  - Walking Field Trip Permission

Additional Forms

Individualized Child Care Plans

You must submit an Individualized Child Care Plan (ICCP) if your child has a learning disability, special needs, a mild or severe food allergy, asthma, seizures, or another medical condition that needs special attention. Parents can complete the ICCP for mild allergies, but the form should be completed in cooperation with and signed by the child’s medical provider for severe/life-threatening allergies. You can find this form on the preschool’s website or request one from preschool staff.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication Administration Forms, if applicable

These forms provide HNP staff with information about medications that your child is taking that need to be administered while the child is at HNP. This includes medications for allergic reactions such as an EpiPen as well as over-the-counter medications such as lotion or Tylenol. You can find this form on the preschool’s website or request one preschool staff. See Medication Administration Policy for more information.

Drop-off and Pick-up Policies

Please note: The following procedures may change due to COVID-19. We will let you know of any changes closer to the start of the preschool year.

Parents must accompany children into and out of the building at all times as you arrive to preschool for the day or depart after class. You must “sign-in” your child each morning upon arrival in order to transfer responsibility of care from parent to authorized program staff. Upon departure you must “sign-out” your child. Once your child is signed out,
he/she is no longer the responsibility of HNP and the HNP staff. The sign-in/sign-out form also has space for parents to leave special contact information for the day or changes in who will pick off or drop off a child. Parents are requested to leave this information if they will be away from their regular telephone number or if some else will pick up their child so that they can be reached in case of an emergency.

HNP staff use the sign-in sheets to track the number of children present and use it as a roster in an emergency situation. A parent who fails to sign their child in/out creates a safety issue; beginning with the fourth time of failure to sign in or out, you can be fined $10.00 per time you forget to sign in or out, payable immediately or billed to the you.

**Drop-off Policies**

Children benefit from routine and you are encouraged to develop a good-bye routine that works for your child. Some parents leave right after signing their child in, other parents leave after settling their child into an activity. You know your child best and what will help them feel ready to say goodbye to you and ready for the school day. We know that it’s sometimes hard for parents to leave their child, but we have found that a lingering goodbye often makes the goodbye even harder for both children and parents.

Families can enter the half day classroom at 8:25 for morning sessions and 12:25 for afternoon sessions and the full day classroom at 8:25 for drop off. The full day program has a flexible drop off between 8:30-9:00, however please arrive no later than 9:00 so your child can participate in circle time activities. There is not currently an early drop off option for any of our classes.

If your child will be late for their session, please call HNP or email your teacher so that we know you will be arriving late. If your child will not be attending on any particular day due to illness or other reasons, please inform HNP as soon as possible. If we haven’t heard from you, we'll try to contact you to make sure all is well.

Please move other children and conversations with other parents outside of the classroom as soon as possible after dropping off your child to allow children to settle in and teachers to start the session. Families are always welcome to enjoy the comfortable rocking chairs and the sunshine in the Exhibit Hall or to enjoy the trails of Hartley Park.

Inside Start: Please help your child get their outdoor gear and snack/lunch out of their backpack and place it in their cubby/on hooks so they can easily access the gear when getting ready to go outside. When gear is all laid out children are more successful with independently dressing to go outside. Please make sure your child goes to the restroom and washes hands before coming into the classroom.

Outside Start: Outside starts will be indicated on a sign outside of the classroom and often happen at well-known locations such as the climbing tree or playscape. Before heading out for an outside start, please make sure your child goes to the restroom and washes their hands and dresses in appropriate gear for the day’s weather (rain gear, snow gear, etc.). The child’s snack(s) and any extra gear should be unpacked and in the appropriate places indoors before heading outside to sign in.

Pick-up Policies

Out of respect to children and staff, please be prompt in picking up your child at the end of the day. Pick up is at 11:30 am and 3:30 pm for half day classes. Pick-up time for the full day classes is flexible, but all children must be picked up by 4:30. Families are welcome to remain at the Nature Center or in Hartley Park to play after children are picked up. Once a child is signed-out they are no longer the responsibility of the HNP staff or program.

If you will be late, please call HNP to let us know. In the case of car malfunction, traffic, snow storm, etc., it is expected that you would be in contact with HNP by the end of your child’s session. Please see Emergency Procedures Related to Child Pick-up for more information about what HNP would do if no one came to pick up a child.

Late Pick-up Fee

If deemed necessary by teachers, a fee of $1.00 per minute may be charged for each child being picked up 5 minutes or more after the official end time of the session. Late pick-up penalty fees must be paid within 24 hours. Families picking their child up late more than four times in three months may have their child care services terminated.

Authorization to Pick-up a Child

Children will only be released to parents/guardians or authorized people listed on the child’s Emergency Information Sheet. HNP cannot and will not allow a child to leave with an Hartley Nature Preschool Parent Handbook. Revised 6.2020
unauthorized person. Any person who is listed on a child’s Emergency Information Sheet is considered authorized to pick up a child from HNP. Any person, including parents, picking up a child may be asked to show an ID at any time. Please let your child’s teachers know if you will have a new person picking up your child or want to add another name to your child’s list of authorized adults. Staff will check any new person’s photo ID when they arrive to pick up the child. If the person does not have a photo ID they will not be allowed to pick-up the child. Again, for the safety of your child, HNP will not release a child to an unauthorized or unknown person.

If you need to deny pick-up authorization to your child’s other parent, you must submit documentation supporting that denial to the Preschool Director. If you have special conditions regarding custody and visitation please meet with your child’s teachers to ensure that all needed information and schedules are in place.

Parking Lot

Hartley Nature Center’s parking lot is used by preschool families, Nature Center visitors, and Hartley Park users. Please drive slowly as there may be children and families walking on the driveway and in the parking lot. For the safety of all children, please hold your child’s hand at all times in the parking lot.

Sample Daily Schedule

The HNP curriculum values spontaneity and takes advantage of seasonal changes and happenings in nature. However, young children benefit from having a routine. Our daily routine includes predictable events such as circle time, snack and meals, rest, and outdoor play time during each session. Below is a sample HNP daily schedule for full and half day classes. This schedule can change daily depending on the weather, play opportunities, and the children’s interests and needs.

**Full Day Classroom Daily Schedule**

**Half Day Classroom Daily Schedule**
Curriculum

As a nature preschool our curriculum is seasonal and place-based, based on what is going on outside in the woods and waters of Hartley Park and on the interests of the children in each classroom. Our seasonal, place-based curriculum is informed by Dodge Nature Preschool’s *Four Seasons Curriculum* and is supplemented with the Creative Curriculum for Preschool and Handwriting Without Tears. The HNP curriculum includes a mixture of inquiry-based and hands-on activities, group and individual activities, indoor and outdoor activities, and active and quiet activities. Children develop self-regulation, problem-solving skills, confidence, and more as they learn in, from, and about the natural world.

Our weekly activities are aligned with the *Early Childhood Indicators of Progress: Minnesota’s Early Learning Standards for Children Ages 3 to 5* (ECIPS). The learning domains addressed in ECIPS (revised in 2017), and in HNP’s curriculum, are: social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language, literacy, and communications, the arts, social systems: cognitive, physical and movement development, mathematics, and scientific thinking.
Sample Developmental Goals for Preschoolers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical development</th>
<th>Social development</th>
<th>Emotional development</th>
<th>Intellectual development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develops balancing skills</td>
<td>• Balances needs and rights of self and others</td>
<td>• Responds to emotional cues</td>
<td>• Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develops independence in dressing in outdoor clothes</td>
<td>• Forms relationships with adults</td>
<td>• Regulates own emotions and behaviors by managing feelings</td>
<td>• Uses symbols and images to represent something not present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses writing and drawing tools</td>
<td>• Works with other children and adults to resolve social problems</td>
<td>• Takes care of own needs appropriately</td>
<td>• Connects numerals with their quantities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Activities

HNP preschoolers will participate in activities that promote their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. These activities will be provided in a manner consistent with each child’s cultural background. There will be a mixture of quiet and active activities as well as a mixture of child-directed and adult-directed activities. Sample activities to promote a child’s development may include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical development</th>
<th>Social development</th>
<th>Emotional development</th>
<th>Intellectual development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Running in the forest</td>
<td>• Cooperative group games such as using a parachute</td>
<td>• Quietly watching and listening to birds</td>
<td>• Playing math and critical thinking games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Balancing on logs</td>
<td>• Playing house or other imaginative games with other children</td>
<td>• Seeing adults model appreciation of the natural world</td>
<td>• Listening to stories read and told aloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jumping in puddles</td>
<td>• Practicing sharing tools and toys in pretend play, while digging or while building</td>
<td>• Discussions of empathy with animals, such as when stepping on an insect</td>
<td>• Practicing creating letters with sticks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities will also require the use of varied equipment and materials both indoors and out. Teachers will change the teaching materials in the classroom every three to four weeks to provide children with a variety of age-appropriate toys, books, dramatic play elements, and other equipment to engage with during indoor play time. Indoor and outdoor activities may include the following equipment and materials:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dancing</th>
<th>Playing games such as follow the leader or Simon Says</th>
<th>Practicing putting on boots and coats independently</th>
<th>Reflecting on the events of the day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manipulating crayons, markers, and paintbrushes</td>
<td>Watching out for each other as we walk in the woods</td>
<td>Cultural cooking events with families</td>
<td>Counting during calendar time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment

HNP’s assessment tool is Teaching Strategies Gold, which is Parent Aware approved and aligned with MN early learning standards. The child’s portfolio of learning will be used in conjunction with ongoing informal assessment to individualize instruction and is shared with families twice a year during parent teacher conferences and as requested.
Technology in the Classroom

At HNP we do not include technology such as computers in our classroom or offer children computers, tablets, or other technological devices to play with. HNP offers children a space when they can be unplugged and be immersed in the rhythms of the natural world and engaged with their classmates and teachers. As digital native, today's children will have ample opportunities to become masters of technology as they grow up. We occasionally show children a brief video to enhance our learning on a topic such as dinosaurs, space, or dog sledding. HNP staff only use mobile devices when with the children to briefly snap photos for the daily email and the children’s learning records or make emergency calls.

Outdoor Play

At HNP we are all about getting outside for child-directed, unstructured play in Hartley Park! We spend as much time as possible each preschool session learning and playing outdoors. It is HNP's policy that all children who are well enough to attend preschool are well enough to participate in outdoor activities and play. In fact, the MN Department of Human Service Licensing requires a daily dose of fresh outdoor air for young children. If children are dressed appropriately and are well enough to attend preschool, weather conditions will not pose an illness risk. We make sure that children are dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the weather conditions. We rely on you to make sure your child is prepared to stay warm and dry for extended periods outdoors each day. We go outside EVERY day, but time outdoors will be appropriately limited in cold weather or severe weather based on the weather forecast from the National Weather Service and the judgment of preschool staff.

Nature Play

Time in nature is critical for a child's healthy development. Playing, learning, and exploring in the woods, waters, and fields of Hartley Park provides a safe space for children to learn how to assess physical risk and build resilience, an environment to nurture good mental health, promotes overall physical and mental health through vigorous activity, and gives children ample opportunities to build relationships with other children and their
teachers. At HNP, nature play is the primary focus of our time outside. Children at HNP will participate in nature play activities including climbing trees, running through the forest, balancing on and jumping from rocks and logs, playing with rocks and sticks, jumping in mud puddles, sledding, playing on ice, exploring in the woods, and much more.

**Stick Play**

Nature play also includes stick play. Many of our preschoolers spend the entire outdoor time with a stick in their hands. Sticks are open-ended and can be anything the child can imagine such as a sword, wand, shovel, or shooter. Stick play is an important form of expression for young children. We coach children throughout the year to use and control their sticks in safe ways. HNP staff monitor the play and help the children adjust the boundaries of stick play depending on how the children are responding to one another. While playing with sticks, children are learning that their classmates need to feel safe in the play, no matter what the play scenario is. We may redirect children who are using sticks in less safe ways to play with their sticks in a different way and do not allow children who are hitting other children with sticks to continue playing with sticks.

**Rough-and-Tumble Play**

Children at HNP engage in rough-and-tumble play. We believe in the value of exuberant, boisterous, rough-and-tumble play to a child’s overall development. This vigorous, big-body play allows children opportunities to use language—both verbal and non-verbal—and learn how to negotiate, take turns, wait, compromise, sometimes dominate and sometimes hold back, and make and follow rules. Children are learning about cause and effect and developing empathy. Big body play also supports optimum physical development because it is so vigorous and because children, since they enjoy it so much, tend to engage in it for an extended period of time. There are many ways that we support safety in rough-and-tumble play including teaching children how to communicate that they want rough-and-tumble play to stop, monitoring (and guiding, if needed) the rough-and-tumble play in progress, designating safe areas where rough-and-tumble play can occur and areas where it cannot occur, and working with children to help them learn their own boundaries and process the interactions occurring during rough-and-tumble play.
What to Bring Each Day

Please send the following items with your child each day that they attend preschool. Please label all items. More information about each of these items can be found in the relevant sections of this parent handbook.

- **Hearty, healthy snack**
  - Snacks must have at least two food groups
  - No peanut or tree nut products or sunflower seeds
  - Please help us model environmentally friendly behavior by making snacks as waste-free as possible
- **Hearty, healthy lunch for full day and Friday Morning Class**
- **Seasonally appropriate outdoor clothing and foot wear**
- **Indoor shoes (can be kept at HNP)**
- **TWO complete changes of seasonally appropriate indoor clothes (can be kept at HNP)**
- **Small blanket, pillow, and lovey that fit in a small reusable bag for full day rest/nap time**

**Required Clothing**

Children need comfortable, non-restrictive clothing that is appropriate for both outdoor and indoor play every day of preschool. In addition, the clothing needs to be easy to take on and take off independently in the restroom. Please send children in “play clothes” so that no one is sad if clothing comes home muddy or wet. Please label all indoor and outdoor clothing, including shoes, to help us get the right clothes on the right child and to ensure that items go home with the correct child!

**Indoor Clothing**

Each child needs a pair of indoor shoes for when we are in the classroom and nature center. Indoor shoes keep children’s feet warm and dry in the classroom and restroom and help keep the classroom clean. Flip-flops and open-toed sandals are not allowed and closed heels are recommended. Each child must have **at least TWO extra complete changes of**
clothing including underwear, socks, pants, and at least one long-sleeve and one short-sleeve top with them every day. These clothes can be kept in the preschool classroom or brought back and forth to in the child’s backpack and should be replenished as they are used, as the seasons change, and as your child grows.

**Outdoor Clothing**

By enrolling in HNP your family has committed to our focus on outdoor play. You must send your child with appropriate gear for outdoor play daily, including rain gear for wet days and snow gear for cold days. If your child is not prepared with the appropriate clothing, we may call you to drop off appropriate clothing or to pick up your child. We will not keep all of the children indoors because one child is not prepared for the weather. Please let your child’s teacher know if you need help finding or affording outdoor gear; we will help you find the gear your child needs. We want to make our program work for your family and we know gear can be a barrier to participation at HNP.

Children will be outside every day in all seasons and all weather and children engaged in nature play usually get wet and dirty. Please send multiple pairs of mittens and other layers that tend to get wet quickly to ensure that children have warm, dry clothing to wear. HNP staff will do our best to dry wet gear between play sessions for the full day classes to ensure that children are warm. Children should be adequately dressed for outdoor play for all seasons and weather conditions. It can be surprisingly chilly in the woods of Hartley Park and we often have snow much longer than other parts of Duluth; always send more clothing than you think is necessary. It is better to have to take off a layer than to be cold because of inadequate layers. Please do not send umbrellas with children as they tend to get in the way and get broken or torn.

Children need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping, climbing, and playing outdoors. Sneakers, rubber boots, winter boots, or well-fitting hiking boots are recommended depending on the season. Closed-toed sandals with heel straps are allowed during the warmest weather. Flip flops and open-toed sandals are not allowed as outdoor shoes. In addition to appropriate shoes, clothing needs for each season include:
You will probably be able to find most of the above items at second-hand stores or garage sales. Reputable companies with these types of clothes include Polarn O. Pyret, Oakiwear, REI, Helly Hansen, L.L. Bean, Lands’ End, Didriksons, Columbia, Patagonia, etc. We have outdoor school partnerships with both Polarn O. Pyret and Oakiwear that gives families a percentage off of purchases. See below for more information or ask preschool staff for more information about these discount programs. If you have trouble locating or affording any of the required outdoor gear, please don’t hesitate to ask for help from HNP staff.

**Rain and Snow Gear Tips**

Rain gear should be waterproof. Wind pants/jackets are not the same as rain pants/jackets. We have found that rain gear works very well if it is either one-piece or bib/overall style pants with a rain coat. Bibs are especially nice because children can wear them in warm weather for wet and muddy play with only a t-shirt or sweatshirt underneath. Reliable brands for rain gear include Polarn O. Pyret, Dickerson’s, Land’s End, and Helly Hansen. One piece suits or bibs and a rain coat will help keep children dry and warm in our in-between seasons and in wet weather as well as keep some of the water and mud off of children and their inside clothes. Remember that rain gear is not the same as a dry suit; children will likely be a bit wet underneath their rain gera if they are jumping, sitting, or laying in puddles.
Polarn O. Pyret is a Swedish company that makes high quality, durable children’s gear. Their Outdoor School Program offers HNP families a 20% savings on outerwear (snow and rain gear, base layers, swim and sun gear, etc) year-round. Get signed up for the Outdoor School Program and 20% savings at:
https://www.polarnopyretusa.com/outdoor_schools_form

We also have a discount for Oakiwear rain suits. Many families find that a one-piece Oakiwear suit works great if they plan to use it just at preschool. Please try to get the suit in a large enough size to find snow gear under the suit for the transition seasons. We have a standing 25% discount for HNP families. Use code Hartley25 at https://oaki.com/

For winter, we recommend buying a one-piece snowsuit or a winter jacket and bib snow pants that are a bit too big in order to keep children’s limbs covered when they bend, stretch, and slide in the snow. If you are going with the two-piece snow gear, we recommend that the coat has a hood and that the snow pants are the bib/overall style with grippy/rubber cuffs to help them stick to boots. For boots, we recommend ones that come up to a child’s calf and that have Velcro or bungee-like tightening system. Rubber boots do not keep children's feet warm during longer play times outdoors in our MN winter. Mittens that have a longer cuff that can be securely tucked into or up and over coat sleeves work the best for keeping hands warm, mittens on hands, and snow out of the mittens. A pair of long, warm, wool boot socks will help keep children’s feet warm. Children can change out of their inside socks to their boot socks before going outside or put boot socks on over inside socks.

Additional Program Information

Holidays and Celebrations

At HNP we may celebrate secular holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and Mother’s Day for the fun of having celebrations and as a way to encourage artistic expression and to practice writing. We may also celebrate special seasonal events such as harvest time in the fall, solstices and equinoxes, and new growth in spring. We do not celebrate religious holidays, do not attempt to provide religious education to children, and do not use religious symbols in the classroom. However, children love
special family traditions and holidays and are welcomed and encouraged to share their special holiday experiences with teachers and other children without censure. When children take the initiative to share their special memories and traditions they learn to respect and appreciate cultural differences. We welcome you into our classrooms to share special songs, stories, and cooking experiences from your family’s culture and traditions with the children. Please schedule such an event with your child’s teachers.

**Birthdays**

Birthdays are very important for most preschoolers and HNP wants to recognize this special day* in a non-competitive, non-commercialized, and pressure-free manner. On a birthday the class will gather around the birthday sun (a large felt sun). The child holds a blow-up earth and walks around the sun one time for each year while all children and staff count. Then, we sing *Happy Birthday* and the child blows out a candle. You can send a picture of your child for each year to share with the children. Families are always welcome to join us for the birthday celebration. Summer birthdays can be celebrated at the half-birthday or at the end of the preschool year. Please do not send treats for the children due to differences in family customs, concerns about allergies, and differences in economic status and please do not pass out birthday invitations at HNP unless you plan to invite every child in the class.

*HNP understands that not all families celebrate birthdays. Please let us know if you do not wish us to celebrate your child's birthday at HNP.

**Toys from Home**

The preschool classroom is prepared to meet the needs of HNP children and to complement the HNP curriculum. Though we may provide some extra play items when outdoors, generally the natural world doesn’t need extra toys to make it engaging and educational for preschoolers! Children are asked not to bring toys from home to preschool with the exception of a small comfort item for nap time in the full day classroom. Toys brought from home present potential problems for children and staff in that they are difficult to share and may get broken. There may occasionally be a day when children can bring something special from home to share with the other children and play with during the
school day. Toys that resemble weapons (other than sticks) and computer/video games are not allowed at HNP.

**Babysitting**

HNP does not endorse or recommend staff to parents or parents to staff for child care outside of HNP hours (babysitting) and neither encourages or prohibits staff from entering into these arrangements with families. HNP assumes no liability whatsoever for any injury, damages, liability, or loss of any kind resulting from or occurring during the private child care or babysitting provided by any HNP staff member who is not on duty at HNP during regular hours of operation.

**Plants and Animals**

We have plants in the preschool classroom in order to provide visually stimulating decorations, to clean the air, and to provide children with the experience of helping to care for a living thing. Only non-toxic plants will be used in the classroom.

Hartley Nature Center is the home to a variety of animals including turtles, snakes and fish. HNP children may have daily interactions with animals. These interactions can take the form of enjoying a classroom pet, visiting resident animals in the Nature Center, animals visiting the preschool classroom with a HNC naturalist, or observing animals in their natural habitats in Hartley Park. These animals may include wild birds, bees/wasps/insects, pet dogs, and a wide variety of other animals. Children may also have encounters with animal feces in Hartley Park as HNP cannot control where wild animals or Hartley Park visitors’ dogs go to the bathroom or whether or not these visitors pick up after their pets. After any encounter with animals or animal feces all staff and children will wash their hands with soap and warm water and put on clean clothes/gear as needed. HNP may also choose to have a small, easy to care for domestic classroom pet such as a mouse, rat, gerbil, hamster, frog, or fish.

**Walking Field Trips**

HNP children will take daily walking field trips into the Hartley Park and Hartley Nature Center grounds for the purpose of nature study and nature play as well as for other curriculum related activities. At this time HNP does not take field trips off the grounds of Hartley Park during the school day. We don’t need to leave Hartley Park to find adventures.
and to learn about our world because we have the forests and trails of Hartley Park to explore. Parents give their permission for these daily walking field trips via the enrollment information form at the time of enrollment.

**Lost and Found**

All items that are found on the trails of Hartley Park or in the Nature Center are located at the lost and found at the main Nature Center desk. HNP staff will do their best to return lost items to you if we know who they belong to.

**Care for Children with Special Needs**

When HNP admits a child with special needs, we will ensure that an individual child care program plan (ICCPP) is developed in writing to meet the child’s individual needs. The ICCPP will specify methods of meeting the child’s needs and be reviewed and followed by all staff who interact with the child. The child’s ICCPP will be coordinated with the child’s individual service plan (ISP) or individual education plan (IEP) when one exists. The ICCPP will also be coordinated with reports from the licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or consulting psychologist as needed. The ICCPP will be reviewed at least annually by the child’s health care provider(s) and the child’s parent/guardian to determine if the needs of the child are being met. Families are responsible for providing any additional staff, staff qualifications, or staff training required by a child’s ICCPP. Any additional staff required by the child’s ICCPP must be appropriately qualified and trained.

**Parent Communication**

**Daily Communication**

Our teachers work hard to meet the needs of all children. As part of this goal, HNP strives for on-going communication and collaboration with all families through a variety of methods. Please feel free to bring any questions or concerns to the preschool teachers and/or the preschool director. Arrivals and departures can be useful times for you to briefly exchanging information or concerns with the preschool teachers. You are strongly encouraged to communicate to staff, verbally or in writing, any information that may help
HNP teach and interact with your child. Please try to share any private information out of the hearing of other adults and other children. It is helpful to share information when:

- A family member is ill.
- A parent is out of town.
- The child did not sleep well the night before.
- A pet is missing or has passed away.
- Other life changes occur, such as a move, a divorce, or the arrival of a new sibling.

However, any topic that will take more than a moment to communicate should be communicated via a written note, an email, or a phone message. A meeting can also be arranged so that you have time to adequately discuss an issue with your child’s teacher(s) and/or the preschool director. You are also welcome to call or email your child’s teacher to talk about your child, the program, or any concerns or questions you may have. The contact number for HNP is 218-724-6735. Teachers’ email addresses are provided at the end of this handbook.

Every class day you will receive an email describing the day’s activities. These emails include photos of the day, information about upcoming events, updates on appropriate seasonal clothing, and other reminders.

**HNP Newsletter**

HNP has a periodic family newsletter. The newsletter contains information about HNP seasonal teaching themes, activities, events, and photos of the children. Families are welcome to contribute content to the newsletter. The newsletter is distributed via email and may be posted on the website.

**Parent Teacher Conferences**

Parent teacher conferences are offered twice a year and are a formally scheduled time for you to discuss your child’s growth and development and to set future goals with your child’s teacher(s). Staff will use a variety of tools to document and report on your child’s intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development including work samples, photos, checklists, and anecdotal notes kept in your child’s assessment portfolio. At conferences you get to hear about your child’s strengths, interests, and successes and
collaborate with your child's teachers to plan for areas in which your child needs to strengthen his/her skills. Please feel welcome to schedule additional meetings with teachers throughout the year anytime you feel it is needed. Please note: conferences will likely be offered virtually or over the phone this year due to COVID-19.

**Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is a vital aspect of our program and critical for your child’s healthy development. There are many ways in which you can help and support HNP, such as volunteering, organizing a fundraiser, or joining the HNC Board of Directors. Parents are encouraged to be involved in HNP in any of the following ways and more:

- Attend Virtual Parent Orientation held before the preschool year begins where you’ll have a chance to meet the staff and learn what to expect for the coming year.
- Attend parent/teacher conferences twice a year.
- Read emails, newsletters, and other communication from HNP.
- Attend parent and family events offered by HNP when possible.
- Volunteer in the classroom. See below for more information.

**Visitors**

Please note: visitor and volunteer policies may change due to COVID-19.

**Parents/Guardians of Enrolled Children**

Parents/guardians of enrolled HNP children are welcome to visit HNP at any time and have access to their child at any time while the child is in the care of HNP. If you want to volunteer for all or part of a preschool session please check with your child's teachers to get on the volunteer schedule.

**University Students**

An important function of HNP is to serve the Duluth community as an example of a high-quality nature preschool program. As such, HNP serves as a resource for projects and questions concerning nature preschools, the importance of nature in education, and early childhood environmental education. UMD, CSS, and other local university and college
students in the HNP classroom may be: making observations, completing a practicum or student teaching assignment, or teaching a practice lesson. You give consent for your child to participate in these general learning activities by initialing the Observation Permission in the Enrollment Form. Student/practicum teachers do take teacher responsibilities in the classroom, but remain under the supervision of HNP staff as well as their university supervisor.

**Community Volunteers**

Many visitors want to observe or participate in HNP’s programs in a variety of ways. All visitors, including grandparents or siblings, must sign in in the classroom. A volunteer may not be left alone with HNP children, other than their own child, at any time. HNP reserves the right to deny access to the preschool classroom or children to any person at any time for the purpose of protecting the rights of children, parents, and staff and for programmatic integrity.

**School-Age Children**

A child under the age of 13 who has attended a kindergarten program is considered a school-age child by the State of MN and, according to State Statutes, “cannot be present in the child care center unless the program is licensed for school-aged children.” The only exceptions are when the child accompanies a parent, caregiver, or staff person into the classroom to pick-up or drop-off an enrolled child or for a brief volunteer session. School-age children must be accompanied by an adult at all times when they visit the HNP preschool classroom.

**Preschool Aged Children**

According to State statutes, preschool aged children may visit HNP for no more than ½ hour and only when given permission by the session’s lead teacher. The parent/guardian must supervise the child at all times since that child is not enrolled at HNP and is thus not under the care of HNP staff.
Photography and Social Media

Photography is a common means for documenting learning and development and is used by HNP staff and by university students doing observations. For example, HNP staff may take photos of a child’s art project to include in the child’s portfolio, take photos for the newsletter, or a local news channel may come to HNP to do a story on nature preschools. If you want restrictions placed on when your child may be photographed or videoed, please indicate this in the Photo/Video Permission on the Enrollment Form.

HNP uses social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram to promote the HNP program and to spread the word about the importance of nature play. No names are used and no “tagging” will be done by HNP staff in photos posted on HNP’s social media sites, including Hartley Nature Center’s website and social media pages.

Research

HNP is proud to be participating on the cutting edge of nature preschool research! We have recently participated in studies about resilience, creativity, and executive function. These research studies have compared Duluth’s nature preschools with traditional preschool programs and found that nature preschools DO support children’s resilience, creativity, and executive function skills! We are excited to continue participating in research opportunities. Researchers are required to provide a written explanation to families about the research procedures and parental permission is required in writing before any child may participate in a research study. A child’s consent will also be requested to the extent possible. Families are not required to participate in any research study. The child’s well-being and comfort is the top priority; thus teachers and/or parents may decide to defer a child’s participation at any time.

Withdrawal of Child Care Services

Parental Notice of Termination

If you wish to discontinue preschool services at HNP a written notice must be submitted to the preschool director at least 30 days prior to your child’s last enrollment day. Tuition is charged until your child’s last official day of attendance following receipt of that
written notification regardless of your child’s attendance during that time. All fees for preschool services must be paid on or before your child’s last official enrollment day at HNP. The deposit will not be refunded and cannot be applied to the child’s last month of preschool if before May.

**Program Notice of Termination of Care**

In the event that any of the following situations occur, preschool services may be terminated by HNP:

- Non-payment of fees by parent/guardian, i.e. 30 days in arrears or breach of established payment plan contract.
- Failure to provide the required health, immunization, and/or emergency contact information.
- A parent’s inappropriate behavior, such as menacing and/or verbal threats towards staff, children, other parents, or property of the program.
- Lack of cooperation from parents/guardians with the program’s efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child’s needs through parent teacher meetings, conferences, and/or additional interventions.
- Chronic lateness (four times or more) in picking up child at the end of the session.
- Failure to pick up an injured or ill child within an hour of being notified, for the second time in a calendar year.
- Failure to provide adequate outdoor clothing for the child to be warm, safe, and dry during daily outdoor play.

A written notice from HNP will be sent to the parent/guardian as soon as possible after the occurrence of any of these events. HNP will also communicate this decision to the parent verbally. A parent may grieve the notice of termination within two working days of its receipt—see Grievance Procedures.

Regardless of the duration of the grievance process, the child or children of the parent/guardian who has received the notice of termination shall remain in HNP for a period of not more than two weeks after the parent/guardian has received the notice of termination.
Behavior Guidance Policies and Procedures

General Policies and Procedures

At Hartley Nature Preschool our behavior policies and procedures encourage positive, healthy, and safe interactions between children and between children and adults. HNP abides by the guidelines from MN Statute 9503.0055 regarding the development and implementation of written policies and procedures for Behavior Guidance. HNP behavior guidance policies and procedures:

- Ensure that our staff provide all children with positive role models of acceptable behaviors;
- Are tailored to be developmentally appropriate for 3-5 year old children;
- Redirect children and groups of children away from problems toward constructive activity in order to reduce conflict;
- Teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behaviors in order to reduce conflict;
- Protect the safety of children and staff persons; and
- Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child’s unacceptable behavior.

In general, HNP staff enforce ground rules, employ logical consequences, and deal with specific problems in a caring, consistent, and positive manner. In general, the staff emphasize positive behaviors, offer reasonable choices, recognize feelings, and make clear when a child’s behavior is unacceptable. The staff will not bribe, use threats, moralize, shout, or humiliate children. If a behavior becomes dangerous, destructive, and/or disruptive then a staff member will intervene in order to protect people and property in a way that protects a child’s self-esteem and helps them understand the problem with the behavior.

Different children and different situations will call for different responses. Physical force would only be used to contain a child if necessary to protect the child or others from harm. You will be notified if your child acts in a harmful manner, for example if he/she bites another child. You may be asked to remove your child for the remainder of the session if their behavior continues to be harmful or threatening.

Any behavior which requires an increased amount of staff guidance and time, such as on-going biting, kicking, hitting, pinching, or scratching will be observed and recorded by staff. If deemed necessary, staff will work with you and other staff members to develop a plan to address the behavior. Observation records created by staff members will be used as the basis for this discussion. Other professionals may be consulted when appropriate.

Referral Process

Occasionally staff members have questions regarding assessment or additional services for children already enrolled in our program or will need to make a plan regarding persistent unacceptable behaviors. When issues such as these arise, you will be notified of the concerns and invited to participate in the development of an individual plan to address program concerns. Continued participation in HNP’s program is contingent upon a cooperative relationship between HNP staff, parents, and appropriate professionals, as needed.

1. Program teaching staff will observe and document the child’s behavior(s) at the onset of a concern regarding personal or developmental behavior.
2. Program teaching staff will communicate with parents regarding the concern.
3. Staff and/or the preschool director will meet with the parents to discuss the behavior(s) and observations and to create an Individual Child Care Plan, which parents must sign within 30 days.
4. If it is indicated that additional professional observation is necessary, staff will provide parents with a list of potential resources outside of HNP that may provide the needed observations, including:
   - Duluth School District—Child Find at 218-336-8744
5. Staff will work with outside professionals to arrange for observation and intervention times that best meet the needs of the child within the context of the child’s participation at HNP.
6. Staff, parents, and outside professional staff will meet periodically to evaluate the outcome of the intervention and the child’s progress.
7. When a child’s behavior results in either of the following situations, the preschool
director will meet with the child’s family and HNP staff to set a date for termination
of child care services:
   - The child’s behavior poses a threat to the physical and emotional safety of
     other children and/or him/herself and staff can no longer assure the safety of
     all children in their care, and/or
   - Through extensive attempts at intervening with any specific behavior, such as
developmental delay, HNP has exhausted the available program, staff,
community, and professional resources and/or staff is only able to meet the
needs of that individual child through frequent or persistent one-on-one care.
While this compromises their ability to adequately meet the needs of all the
children in their care, it also indicates that HNP is no longer the most
appropriate environment for the child.

Financial Policies

Family Payment Policy

HNP is a program of Hartley Nature Center, a 501(c) 3 non-profit. We rely on revenue
from tuition fees for the preschool’s operating expenses. It is essential that families pay
tuition promptly and regularly. By enrolling a child in HNP and signing the HNP Contract for
Preschool Services, you agree to pay the fees as set out in HNP’s policies and procedures.
   - Communication is key. If you are struggling to make a tuition payment, come in and
talk to Kaitlin or the Bookkeeper. We want to help your family make the payment
process as smooth as possible.
   - Tuition is due on the 1st of the month every month.
   - The deposit of one month’s tuition is necessary to secure a child’s place in HNP. The
deposit is non-refundable and will be applied to the May tuition only.
   - Tuition is based on the enrollment schedule, not on your child’s actual attendance.
   Sick days, vacation days, holidays, staff development days, and emergency closings
are considered to be part of the enrollment schedule.
- If payment is not received by five business days after the due date, HNP will apply a $25 late fee.
- If payment is 30 days past due it becomes delinquent. See Collection of Delinquent Accounts for more information.
- HNC will charge a $35 handling fee for the processing of any check returned to Hartley Nature Center due to insufficient funds (NSF). Upon receipt of the second NSF check, all future HNP tuition payments must be made by cashier's check, money order, or automatic electronic withdrawal.
- If a child is withdrawn from the program, the family must provide written notification to the Preschool Director 30 days before the child's last day. Payment is due for those 30 days. The deposit is not refunded to the family. See Withdrawal Policies for more information.

**Accepted Methods of Payment**

Tuition for the nine-month school year can be paid annually or monthly. A one-time 3% discount is made to accounts paid in full for the entire preschool year by check or cash on or before the first day of preschool. Advance payment for the full year cannot be made by credit card.

Hartley Nature Center prefers that monthly tuition payments are made via an automatic bank draft from a checking account in order to make payments smooth and efficient. You must give authorization for these automatic monthly withdrawals via the Payment Options Form. Automatic payments will start with the September 1st tuition payment and end with the April 1st tuition payment. The preschool deposit is applied to the May tuition payment and must be paid in order to secure a child’s place at HNP. You also have the option of paying by check, card, or cash on a monthly basis. If you select a monthly payment option you will receive a monthly invoice via email.

Please contact HNC's bookkeeper to discuss additional alternative methods of payment and questions or concerns related to your payments.
Childcare Assistance and Scholarships

HNP accepts St. Louis County Child Care Assistance and MN Early Learning Scholarship payments. HNP will work with your family and St. Louis County or the State to make sure all the paperwork is completed for payments to be made to HNP. Families that are on a child care assistance program are also eligible for a reduced rate on HNC membership and camp programs.

HNP also has a limited scholarship fund. You can apply for the scholarship fund if you DO NOT qualify for either an Early Learning Scholarship or County Child Care Assistance and need help paying for preschool. Documentation of your income and need is required with the application. HNC scholarship applications are considered on an individual basis and may cover 25-75% of tuition. You can find the application on our website or contact preschool staff for a copy.

Collection of Delinquent Accounts

An account is considered past-due when the balance is delinquent more than 30 days from the posted due date. The following steps will be taken when an account becomes 30 days past-due, in addition to the $25 late fee charged when a payment is not received by five business days after the due date:

1. You will receive email notification that your invoice is past due.
2. The preschool director and bookkeeper will speak with the family.
3. The preschool director and bookkeeper will meet with you to determine a payment schedule, such as a promissory note or signed payment contract.
4. HNC requires bank account and/or credit card information for automatic withdrawal so that we are assured of receiving future payments.
5. If a delinquent account is not paid as agreed upon in the payment plan, the account will be turned over to a collection agency and enrollment will be terminated. See Withdrawal Policies for more information on Program Notice of Termination of Care. The parent/guardian will be responsible for all costs of collection, including fees charged by the collection agency and/or legal fees.
Confidentiality Policy

HNP has an obligation according to the MN Data Practices Act, MN Medical Records Act, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act to safeguard personal information. All personal information is kept locked. Your child’s record is available to you upon request. Staff members may never share with others the following information without your permission:

- Names, addresses, phone numbers, or emails of children, or parents (other than those shared in the HNP Family Directory and staff HNC email addresses).
- Medication Administration forms.
- Health Care Summaries, Immunization Records, ICCP forms, Accident Reports, and other forms with health and insurance information.
- Credit card, debit card, and other payment information.
- Participation of families in needs-based assistance or other human service programs.
- Results of informal or formal assessment screenings, special needs information including Individual Education Plan (IEP), and Individual Child Care Plan (ICP) information.
- As reasonable, information about your child’s day at HNP will be shared personally with you without other parents or children listening in.

Health Policies and Procedures

First Aid Policies

Great care is taken to provide a safe environment and children are taught safe practices for being in the preschool classroom, Nature Center, and outdoors. However, sometimes accidents and injuries occur. All teachers and assistant teachers are certified in first aid and CPR as required by the State of MN. There is a first aid kit in the classroom and with the class outdoors. In the event of minor illness or injury, such as minor bumps, bruises, cuts, or insect bites, a staff member will administer appropriate first aid which is always accompanied by verbal explanation and appropriate comfort.

You can expect an accident/injury report any time your child needs first aid beyond a Band-Aid and appropriate comforting. You will be contacted immediately if an injury requires emergency attention. Injuries that require a child to receive treatment beyond over-the-counter treatment by a physician are reported within 24 hours to the State Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

**Sources of Emergency Medical Care**

In an emergency situation a staff member will immediately call 911. If emergency transportation is required it will be provided by the paramedics that respond to the 911 call to the hospital that you indicated on the Emergency Information Sheet. You will be contacted immediately; if you cannot be reached, HNP staff will contact the emergency contacts listed on your child’s Emergency Information Sheet. Injuries that require EMS response are reported within 24 hours to the State Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing at (651) 431-6500.

**Children’s Health Records**

A completed and signed Immunization Form, Health Care Summary, ICCP for allergies, and Emergency Information Sheet MUST be on file when the child begins enrollment at HNP. There are no exceptions to this policy. You must keep your child’s health forms and the Emergency Information Form current.

**Immunization Policy**

According to MN state law, a child cannot enroll in child care until they have received the minimum shots required by law or filed a medical or non-medical exemption. According to the State, children who have not had all their shots are at risk of serious illness and also pose a risk to the health of other children in our care and their families. You must submit a record of immunizations at the time of enrollment. There are no exceptions. An updated report is required whenever a child receives additional immunizations. Families who have medical exemptions for immunizations must have their health care provider sign their immunization form. Families who choose not to immunize or who choose only to partially immunize must submit a notarized immunization form before the first day of preschool.
HNP must have records on file showing that each preschooler has been immunized against the following diseases or has a medical or non-medical exemption: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b), hepatitis A and B, chickenpox (varicella), and pneumococcal disease. Rotavirus and flu vaccines are recommended for all infants and young children, but are not required.

- Learn more about each vaccine and why it is important: [https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center](https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center)
- MN Department of Health Immunization Information Page for Parents: [https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/healthykidspar.html](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/immunize/basics/healthykidspar.html)

**Sunscreen and Bug Spray**

Please apply sunscreen and bug spray to your child prior to arrival at HNP for the morning. Physical barriers to the sun such as long sleeve shirts and wide brimmed hats are highly encouraged. Please apply bug spray outdoors rather than inside the nature center.

If weather conditions change, full and half day teachers may apply sunscreen and DEET-free, natural insect repellant. Full day teachers will apply sunscreen and bug spray when needed before afternoon play sessions. Permission for applying sunscreen and bug spray is given on the Emergency Information Form. If you prefer a sunscreen and/or bug spray other than what HNP provides, you must provide the product in the original containers and fill out an over-the-counter Medication Administration form. See Administration of Medications policy for more information.

**Ticks**

HNP recommends that you check your child for ticks at the end of each day. This can be a routine that you do during bath time or while getting ready for bed. We'll teach children how to do a basic tick check after outdoor play time and we'll remove a tick that is spotted crawling across a child's clothing or skin.

**Administration of Medications**

If your child is on medications which must be administered during the time they are at HNP, the medicine must be in the original prescription bottle with the child’s name, the Hartley Nature Preschool Parent Handbook. Revised 6.2020
physician/ licensed provider’s or dentist’s name, and the date on the label. Medications may only be given to the child for whom they are prescribed. Outdated/expired medications will not be administered. Any unused portion of medication will be returned to you or destroyed if not picked up after seven days. For prescription medications, you must fill out a Prescription Medication Administration Form and the form must be signed by the child’s health care provider or dentist. Prescription Medication Administration Forms must be submitted annually. This includes forms for allergy medications such as EpiPens.

Over the counter (OTC) medications such as Tylenol, cough syrups, or cough drops require an Over-the-Counter Medication Administration Form signed by a parent. Things such as hand lotion or face cream also require an Over-the-Counter Medication Administration Form. OTC medications can only be administered when provided in the original container and must be administered according to manufacturer’s dosage and instructions printed on the container unless you provide signed instructions from the child’s health care provider. OTC medications will be stored out of reach of children and according to directions on the original container. Over-the-Counter Medication Administration forms must be submitted annually. Staff are trained annually in the safe administration of medications.

**Sick Policies Related to COVID-19**

Due to the risk of COVID-19, it is imperative that you keep your child home if they are ill. Any child with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above or other signs of illness will not be admitted to HNP. Children will be screened upon arrival to Hartley.

As of June 16, 2020 the a child must not attend child care if they have the following symptoms: new onset cough or shortness of breath by themselves OR at least 2 of the following: fever (100.4°F or higher), chills, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of sense of smell or taste, and GI symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting or nausea. Please see the information from the Minnesota Department of Health [here](#) for when children, including siblings of sick children and the children of sick parents, can return to HNP after experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, with or without a positive test result.
If your child or a member of your family is diagnosed with COVID-19 you MUST notify HNP immediately by calling 218-724-6735. If a staff member or child is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will contact the Minnesota Department of Health and follow their recommendations for program closure and cleaning and for notification and exclusion of individuals who may have been exposed.

**Sick Children**

HNP is unable to care for sick children. Your child should not come to preschool if they cannot participate in HNP program activities with reasonable comfort, if they are sick enough to be “not feeling themselves,” or if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. If your child is well enough to come to preschool, they are well enough to play outside and participate in all normal preschool activities. If your child is sick, please call or email HNP and let us know. If your child is absent because of a communicable illness, we will let other families know that their children have been exposed to an illness. Staff members are not allowed to discuss a child’s health or care with other children or HNP families, beyond saying that the child is home sick.

If your child becomes ill while at HNP, you will be called immediately. Sick children will be isolated from other children. Sick children must be picked up within 30 minutes of notification of an illness. If you are not able to pick up your child, they must be picked up by another authorized person listed on the Emergency Information Sheet. A staff member will attend to the needs of the sick child and the child will be supervised at all times.

A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors that the Commissioner of Health determines to be contagious and a physician/provider determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others, **must not attend** preschool according to MN Department of Human Services Licensing requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>See exclusion guidance above and find more information from the Minnesota Department of Health <a href="#">here</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Pox</td>
<td>Until all the blisters have dried into scabs (approximately 6 days after rash onset).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)</td>
<td>Until at least a full 24 hours after treatment begins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diarrhea

Until uncontrolled diarrhea stops, there are no other excludable symptoms (e.g. fever), and child is back to normal eating, drinking, and toileting patterns. Or until a medical exam indicates that it is not a communicable disease. Uncontrolled diarrhea is an increased number of stools, compared with a person’s normal pattern, along with watery stools, and/or increased stool that cannot be contained by use of a toilet. Preschoolers may not get to the toilet in time. It has a distinctive smell that is noticeably different from a child’s normal BMs.

Fever

A fever is a temperature of 100.4 or above. Children may return when symptoms are gone for 24 hours and no fever reducing medication has been given. Fevers controlled by medications are still fevers; children must stay home until free of fever for 24 hours without the use of medication.

Impetigo

Until child has been treated with antibiotics for a full 24 hours.

Lice (head)

Until after the first treatment and no live lice are seen.

Rash with or without Behavior Change

Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not that of a communicable disease.

Respiratory Infection

Until child is without fever for 24 hours and is well enough to participate in normal activities. No exclusion for other mild respiratory infections without fever as long as the child can participate comfortably in all routine activities.

Ringworm

Until 24 hours after the first treatment has been started.

Scabies

Until 24 hours after the first treatment has been started.

Streptococcal Sore Throat

Until at least a full 24 hours after treatment begins and the child is without fever for 24 hours without medication.

Vomiting

Until vomiting stops for 24 hours. Vomiting is defined as two or more episodes in the previous 24 hours.

Napping/ Rest Time Policies for Full Day Children

There is no rest/nap time in half day classes or Friday Morning Class. Full day children are required to take at least 30 minutes of rest time. At HNP children do not have to close their eyes or sleep if they are not tired or choose not to, however children must rest their bodies quietly. Learning to rest your body quietly is a life-skill and a quiet rest is a rare treat in this busy world! We teach the children that resting their bodies is important for their health to recharge for our busy afternoon of play and fresh air. Children may get up to play quietly with a teacher away from napping children after they have rested quietly for 30 minutes or...
completed their nap. Many children who don’t nap at home will nap in a nature-based program because they play so hard in the fresh air all morning. For those who do sleep, we provide a maximum rest time of approximately 1.5 hours, however the afternoon's activities may begin early if all the children are already awake. HNP provides a cot sheet for your use for the year. Please send a small pillow and blanket for your child for nap time that fits in a small reusable shopping bag or similar sized bag and take the cot sheet, blanket, and pillow home to wash every other week and when soiled or wet. Children may also bring a small, soft comfort item from home. The blanket, pillow, and comfort item may be left at preschool.

**Allergies**

If your child has a known allergy HNP must maintain current information about the allergy in an Individualized Child Care Plan (ICCP) so that we’re aware of the allergy and how to respond. The ICCP must be on file BEFORE the start of preschool. If the allergy is mild you may complete the ICCP. If the allergy is severe, you must work with your child’s health care provider to create the ICCP. You can request an ICCP from preschool staff or download it from the preschool website. Please let staff know if your child has a food intolerance that is not an allergy that we should be aware of. No paperwork is necessary for a food intolerance.

**Full Day Lunches**

Full day children will bring a morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack from home. HNP asks that parents prepare a lunch from home for many reasons. 1) You know your child's taste preferences. We want children to be eating a hearty, sustaining meal each day so they are at their best; lunches from home tend to be the most successful in doing this. 2) We are out in the woods until right before lunch (or even for lunch on some days) and we would not be able to do this if the teachers needed to be indoors preparing a meal. 3) A lunch from home is a good mid-day connection between parents and children. Children look forward to seeing what their parent has prepared for them and feel a parent’s nurturing amidst their day of adventures at Hartley.

**Half and Full Day Snack Guidelines**

Half day child will bring a snack from home to eat at snack time. Please keep in mind:
 HNP is a peanut, tree nut, and sunflower seed free classroom (see below).
 According to state regulations, snacks and lunches must contain at least two food groups.
 We recommend healthy meals and snacks that contain a mixture of carbohydrates, fats, and protein to give your child lots of energy to play.
 Snacks and lunches must be stored at room temperature. Send a cold pack if needed to keep food cool.
 Send a utensil with your child if they need one to eat; it will be returned home for washing.
 Children are not allowed to trade or share food due to concerns about sharing germs and allergens.
 As a nature preschool we are committed to modeling stewardship for our natural world. Please try to be mindful of the packaging in your child’s meals and snacks and try to make them as trash-free as possible. We thank you and so does the Earth! Remember, trash free is the way to be!
 Please see the Nutrition Tips included in the Family Resources section for more about nutritious snacks and meals.

**Peanut, Tree Nut, and Sunflower Seed Free Classroom**

HNP is committed to having a peanut, tree nut, and sunflower seed free classroom to keep our children with life-threatening allergies safe. Please do not send peanut, tree nut, or sunflower seed products for your child’s snack or lunch and please carefully check labels. Tables are cleaned before and after each meal to reduce the risk of cross-contamination from potential allergens.

 Peanuts and tree nuts are not allowed. Tree nuts include, but are not limited to: almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, walnuts, Brazil nuts, and pistachios.
 Sunflower seeds are not allowed. Sun butter (made of sunflower seeds) is not allowed. Sunflower oil is allowed.
Snacks that say they are “manufactured in the same facility that processes peanuts and tree nuts” or sunflower seeds are okay as long as the snack does not contain nuts or traces of nuts or sunflower seeds.

Snacks that say “May contain traces of nuts” or sunflower seeds on the label are not allowed.

Be extra careful to read the labels of granola bars and sandwich bread, which often unexpectedly contain nuts.

Drinking Water

Drinking water is always available to the children via water in reusable cups in the classroom. Children will each be provided a clean reusable cup with fresh drinking water during snack and lunch. The cups are kept at HNP and are cleaned and sanitized after each use. Children are taught that we never share cups. Children will also have access to water when playing outdoors and staff will encourage children to take water breaks for proper hydration.

Milk and Milk Alternatives

HNP is required to provide 1% or skim cow’s milk to children who eat lunch at HNP. If your child is unable to drink cow’s milk, we provide soymilk as a nutritionally equivalent substitute. If your child is unable to drink cow’s milk or soymilk, you must provide a milk alternative from home in your child’s lunch. Your child needs a doctor’s permission to have any beverage other than cow’s milk at lunch, including soymilk. Please fill out the Lunch Beverage Permission Form so your child’s teachers know what beverage to give your child at lunch time.

Toileting Policies

Children are required to be toilet-trained before enrolling in HNP. Children should also be comfortable using the toilet facilities at Hartley Nature Center, which can be loud and startling. We encourage you to visit the Nature Center prior to the start of the preschool year to introduce their child to the bathroom and practice using it. Preschool children are often just learning to wipe after pooping and HNP staff are always willing to help a child wipe when needed.
Accidents do sometimes occur and are a normal and expected part of preschool life. If a child has an accident while at HNP, staff will help the child get clean and dry and change into clean clothes while reassuring the child. Permission to use baby wipes in the case of a toileting accident is given on the Enrollment Information Form.

Sometimes when children are on a walking field trip in Hartley Park it is not possible to return to the building in a timely manner to use the bathroom, so a child may do a “nature pee” in order to prevent an accident. Learning to do a “nature pee” is a life skill that is handy for camping and cabin life in northern MN! A family may request that a child does not do a “nature pee” while at preschool and we will do our best, however it is not always possible to return to the nature center in time and we would rather a child try a “nature pee” than have an accident. A “nature pee” is always done away from the group for privacy and the child and adult use hand sanitizer following the “nature pee” and wash their hands upon return to the building. We try to avoid “nature poops,” but are always prepared for one just in case.

**Touch and Nurturing**

Physical touch is an important part of the care and nurturing of young children. Children feel loved, accepted, and supported through the sensations of touch by nurturing adults and peers. Nurturing touch is necessary for every child’s emotional growth. Affectionate nurturing touch includes: hugging, holding on lap, rocking, carrying, patting or rubbing backs, and hand holding. While tickling may be an appropriate form of playful touch, it is kept to a minimum at HNP because of its potential for getting out of hand. Physical touch should be respectful of children’s body cues and only occur with their permission. Children always have the right to refuse these touches except for safety purposes. Staff members are sensitive to children’s requests for physical interaction. Staff model appropriate nurturing touches. Children are also taught to respect adults’ and children’s touch preferences.

COVID-19 may change our practices for nurturing touch. However, know that your child’s teachers will always be prepared to provide your child the comfort and nurturing needed in the event of a rough drop off, injury, or other moment of need.
Children always have the right to refuse touch except for the purpose of safety or cleansing. Safety or cleansing touch includes assisting with face and hand washing, nose wiping, assisting with toileting, assisting with clothing changes when necessary, and first aid treatment. Physical intervention occurs only when necessary for the safety of children and staff. Children are taught through assisted interactions, modeling, and verbal guidance to use words and problem-solving skills rather than physical reactions to settle their differences with others.

**Weather Emergency Closings**

HNP follows the Duluth Public Schools District #709 for winter and severe weather closings. If the Duluth Public School district is closed, delayed two hours, or closes early, HNP will do the same. The closing or two-hour delay will be broadcast on local radio and TV stations. When possible, the closing/delay information will be posted on the preschool Facebook page and you will receive an email to alert you to the closing. However, the local news stations are the most up to date sources for closure information. In the event of an early closure, children must be picked up by an authorized adult within one hour of the announcement of an official school district closing. When the weather conditions are poor, but preschool is not closed, HNP encourages you to use your best judgment in determining whether or not your child will attend.

**Emergency Procedures Related to Child Pick-Up**

**Attempted Unauthorized Pick-up**

If an unauthorized person attempts to pick-up a child, the child will not be released to that person. Staff will immediately contact another authorized person to come to pick up the child. Staff will call 911 if necessary.

**Emergency Pick-up Situation**

If a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of the scheduled dismissal time, without communication from the parents, HNP will attempt to reach the parent/guardian by phone.
If HNP is unable to reach a parent/guardian, we will telephone the emergency contacts listed on the child’s Emergency Information Sheet.

In the event that the parent is unable to contact HNP, is unable to pick up a child, HNP has been unable to contact parents/guardians, or other authorized adults listed on the child’s Emergency Information Sheet, and if no one has contacted HNP by one hour after the session closing time HNP will assume an emergency situation exists and HNP staff will call the Duluth Police Department. At this point the police will attempt to contact parents and/or authorized adults to pick up the child. If no one can be contacted, the police may decide to accept custody and to transport the child to a crisis shelter that is equipped to deal with children in emergency situations. HNP does not allow staff to take children home with them unless they are listed as an authorized adult on the child’s Emergency Information Form.

**Emergency Preparedness**

You trust HNP to keep your children safe during the day and expect staff to be properly equipped to handle emergencies of all kinds. HNP has an emergency response plan for potential crises that has been reviewed by an officer of the Duluth Police Department and meets State requirements. This Emergency Response Plan can be found at the end of this handbook.

**Emergency Drills**

HNP conducts monthly fire drills, as required by the State of MN. HNP is also required to conduct monthly tornado drills in the months of April, May, and September.

**Emergency Relocation**

In the event of an evacuation, staff and children will walk through Hartley Park and down Fairmont Street or across the parking lot and down the Superior Hiking Trail to Concordia Lutheran Church. However, if necessary children will be transported in a vehicle such as a bus. Permission for transport is provided by on the Enrollment Form. HNP will notify families via email, phone, and/or social media that parents/guardians or authorized adults should pick up children at the emergency relocation site. In order to pick up a child, the authorized adult may be asked to show an ID and will sign a Reunification Form.
The emergency relocation site is:

- Concordia Lutheran Church
  2501 Woodland Avenue
  Duluth, MN 55803
  (218) 728-4229

Concordia Lutheran is located just down the road from the entrance to the Nature Center’s parking lot on the corner of Woodland Avenue and Fairmont Street. It is a large, white, sway-backed church with a parking lot on three sides. Maps of routes to the relocation site can be found in the preschool classroom.

**Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy**

Children need a safe, nurturing environment that assists them to grow, learn, and feel loved by their caretakers. In order to grow and learn, children’s minimum needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, bathing, clean clothes, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love, a feeling of importance, and a safe, non-violent home setting must be met. When these needs are not met, a child cannot grow and learn as easily. HNP is committed to providing an environment that encourages the child’s safe growth and learning. As mandated reporters, HNP staff are required to make a report if there is reason to believe or suspect that a child is being neglected or abused or subjected to witnessing domestic abuse, or has been within the past three years. It is the staff member who is mandated to report versus simply a member of the administrative staff. All staff at HNP will comply with the letter and spirit of this law.

This section provides HNP’s policies and procedures for reporting suspected child maltreatment as well as for reporting complaints about the operation of HNP as required by the State of MN. Mandated reporting policies and procedures are also available upon request to families.

**Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect?**

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report

- If you know a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- To report suspected maltreatment of a child occurring at HNP contact the Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing Maltreatment Intake Line at (651) 431-6600.
- To report suspected maltreatment of a child occurring within a family or in the community contact the Initial Intervention Unit of the St. Louis County Child Protection Agency at (218) 726-2012 or 800-450-9777 Monday-Friday 8:00am-8:00pm.
- To report possible licensing violations at HNP not involving abuse or neglect contact the Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing at (651) 431-6500.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and are available from the HNP Director.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.
Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services, by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Investigations

An internal review will be completed and corrective actions taken within 30 calendar days if necessary to protect the health and safety of children in the care of HNP when HNP has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made. The review will include an evaluation of whether:

- related policies and procedures were followed;
- the policies and procedures were adequate;
- there is a need for additional staff training;
- the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

The primary person or position who will ensure that an internal review is carried out is the Preschool Director. Hartley Nature Center’s Executive Director will be the secondary
person to carry out an internal review when there is reason to believe that the primary person was involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment.

**Documentation of the Internal Review**

The primary or secondary person to carry out the review will document that the internal review has been completed and provide documentation showing the review was completed to the commissioner upon the commissioner’s request.

**Corrective Action Plan**

Based on the results of the internal review, HNP will develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or by HNP, if any.

**Staff Training**

HNP provides training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). HNP will document that this training has been provided in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that this policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

**Grievance Procedures**

In the pursuit of our mission, HNP is committed to the protection of individual rights for all members of the HNP community including staff, families, and children.

**Family Grievance Procedures**

If you believe you or your child has been treated unfairly with regard to program procedures or program policies, use the following grievance procedure:

1. The parent or authorized representative (the “complainant”) should inform the teacher or other staff member (the “respondent”) against whom the parent/guardian has the complaint of the nature of the complaint and discuss it with him/her. Most concerns are resolved this way.
2. If it is not possible for the complainant to discuss the complaint with the respondent or if discussion with the respondent does not resolve the complaint, the complainant should inform the Preschool Director of the complaint.

3. The Preschool Director will meet with the complainant to discuss their concern as quickly as possible within one week of the complaint.

4. The Preschool Director will meet with the staff member(s) concerned within 2 days after meeting with the complainant.

5. The Preschool Director’s decision will be communicated to the complainant and the respondent as promptly as possible and no longer than one week after meeting with the respondent.

6. In the event that the Preschool Director is the “respondent”, the Hartley Nature Center Executive Director will hear the grievance and proceed through the grievance policy from step 3.

Any concerns will be shared between the preschool director, preschool staff, and the HNC executive director. Information may also be shared with Hartley Nature Center’s Board of Directors. It is important to HNP that we maintain open lines of communication to ensure the quality of our program and in order to adequately evaluate our program.
## Resources for Families

### SOUTHERN ST. LOUIS COUNTY

### FAMILY RESOURCE GUIDE

#### FAMILY SERVICES

**Parent Aware Parent Services**
- Child Care Referral Services and Resources
- Free Child Care Search, Statewide Family Support Services and Community Resources for young children and families
- 1-888-291-9811
- [http://parentaware.org/learn/](http://parentaware.org/learn/)

**United Way 2-1-1**
- Info and referral program connecting people with essential services such as: food, shelter, clothing, health care, mental health care and other types of support.
- 2-1-1 OR Toll-free 800-543-7709
- 211@hunitedway.org

**Bridge to Benefits**
- Find out if you qualify for public programs that can help you stretch your budget. Free and confidential.
- [www.bridgetobenefits.org](http://www.bridgetobenefits.org)

**Early Learning Scholarships**
- Scholarship Administrator:
  - Northland Foundation
  - 202 W Superior St, Suite 610
  - Duluth, MN 55802
  - (218)723-4040
  - (800) 433-4045
  - info@northlandfdn.org

**Lutheran Social Service**
- Crisis Nursery: (218)302-6879
- [www.lssmn.org](http://www.lssmn.org)

### ST. LOUIS COUNTY SERVICES

**[www.co.st-louis.mn.us](http://www.co.st-louis.mn.us)**
- 100 N 5th Ave W, Duluth MN 55802

**St. Louis County Public Health** 218-725-5210
- Family Home Visit Nurse Program
- Follow Along—Monitors a child’s development
- Immunizations
- WIC Food Program

**St. Louis County Social Services** 218-726-2101
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Health Care Coverage
- Food Support (SNAP)

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

**Help Me Grow and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**
- Call for information about your child’s growth and development especially if you have a developmental concern.

**Duluth School District** 218-336-8744
- [Proctor/Hermantown School District](http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us)
  - 218-218-655-5005 ext 7016 or [jbrown@nlsec.org](mailto:jbrown@nlsec.org)
- To Refer a Child:

**Early Childhood Family Education—ECFE**
- [Duluth School District](http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us)
- 218-336-8744
- [Proctor/Hermantown School District](http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us)
  - 218-729-9563

**Early Childhood Screening**
- Recommended when child is three years.

**Duluth School District** 218-336-8816 or [ECScreening@duluth.k12.mn.us](mailto:ECScreening@duluth.k12.mn.us)
- [Proctor/Hermantown School District](http://www.duluth.k12.mn.us)
  - 218-628-4958 ext 1 or [earlychildhood@proctor.k12.mn.us](mailto:earlychildhood@proctor.k12.mn.us)
Early Learning Scholarships

State of MN Early Learning Scholarships are for 3 and 4 year old children whose families meet financial requirements. HNP is a three-star Parent Aware rated program, so up to $5,000 per scholarship will be awarded. Children who turn 5 before September 1 are not eligible for Early Learning Scholarships.

Please contact the Northland Foundation NOW to get information about applying for the scholarships as there are a limited number of scholarships available.

Website: https://northlandfdn.org/special-initiatives/

Or call the Northland Foundation for an application and to be guided through the application process: 218-260-2736 or 1-800-433-4045

Northland Foundation
202 W. Superior St. Ste 610
Duluth, MN 55802

**Nutrition Tips for Families**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>2 year olds</th>
<th>3 year olds</th>
<th>4 and 5 year olds</th>
<th>What counts as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>1 - 1½ cups</td>
<td>1 - 1½ cups</td>
<td>¼ cup of fruit: ¼ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ¼ cup 100% fruit juice ¼ medium banana 4 - 5 large strawberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>1½ cups</td>
<td>1½ - 2 cups</td>
<td>½ cup of veggies: ¼ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens 1 cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>3 ounces</td>
<td>4 - 5 ounces</td>
<td>4 - 5 ounces</td>
<td>1 ounce of grains: 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes 1 cup cooked rice or pasta 1 tortilla (6” across)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein Foods</td>
<td>2 ounces</td>
<td>3 - 4 ounces</td>
<td>3 - 5 ounces</td>
<td>1 ounce of protein foods: 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 tablespoon peanut butter ½ cup cooked beans or peas (1 medium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>2½ cups</td>
<td>½ cup of dairy: ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt 4 ounces cheese 1 string cheese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some foods are easy for your child to choke on while eating. Skip hard, small, whole foods such as hot dogs, grapes, and raw carrots into pieces smaller than the size of your child's thumb—about the size of a nickel.

There are many ways to divide the Daily Food Plan into meals and snacks. View the Meal and Snack Patterns and Ideas to see how these amounts might look on your preschooler’s plate: www.choosemyplate.gov/for-preschoolers.html

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Acknowledgements

Contact Information
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- Fax: 218-724-4891

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- director@hartleynature.org

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Emergency Action Plan
See following pages for the Emergency Action Plan required by the MN DHS.