Heartworks Montana

Parent Handbook



**Welcome to Heartworks Montana!**

***I look forward to sharing the year ahead with your child and your family. Watching children learn and explore is an exciting process and I am blessed that you have chosen Heartworks Montana to be their place to grow.***

***~Jennifer***

***Mission statement*:** To create an environment where learning and exploring are modeled and encouraged. To create an atmosphere that is calm and uncluttered so imaginations can soar. To be fully present and in tune to each other’s needs as peers, as teachers and as friends so all types of communication are honored and every child’s spirit is embraced

***About the Owner/Director****:* My name is Jennifer Brassard and I have been practicing my passion of teaching young children for twenty years. I have a B.S. in Elementary Education from the University of Vermont and am certified K-6 teacher in Vermont and Montana. I moved to Montana in 2011 to be with my partner, Taylor Lonsdale, and his two children. I have grown to love the vast beauty and open spaces of Montana as well as the kind and loving community that surrounds us.

My background as a preschool teacher comes from a Waldorf & Montessori inspired school in Vermont where the classrooms were uncluttered and clean, the learning centers were filled with items made from natural materials and the teaching tools were not commercialized. I have been teaching preschool for twenty years, with many years acting as a program director and teacher mentor.

My passion in work is to offer children a loving and peaceful place to learn and grow while giving them the tools to explore the world around them. My professional goal is to be able to offer classes and work with teachers and parents alike on how to best create this environment for our children, both within ourselves and in the space around us. My passion outside of work is spending time with my family and my horse, Reign. I have been riding since the age of ten and have always cherished the peacefulness of being around horses and the partnerships that I have developed with them. It’s a delicate balance of love, trust and communication, certainly something that I find useful in all facets of life, especially in my teaching.

**Attendance/Absences/Sickness**: Heartworks Montana is based on a nine-month school year and follows the Bozeman Public School systems calendar unless otherwise stated. Monthly tuition reflects all closure dates. A calendar of closure dates and reminder notices will be posted.

It is important that your children arrive in a timely manner and keep regular attendance at Heartworks Montana. This will allow your child to take part in all of the important aspects of the program and helps every child in the program to have a consistent schedule and school routine. However, in the case that your child is ill please keep in mind the health and well being of others at the school and keep your child at home.

If your child has any of the following symptoms I ask that your child remain home.

\*Fever over 99.5 degrees

\*Montana Administrative Rules require children to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to childcare, regardless of having other symptoms.

\*Diarrhea

\*Vomiting, stomach flu

\*RSV

\*Bacterial infections

\*Strep throat, scarlet fever, impetigo, bacterial conjunctivitis, skin infections.

\*Any of these infections must be treated with antibiotics for a period of 24 hours before returning to childcare

\*Ear infections

\*Eye discharge

\*Skin rashes

\*Head lice

\*Uncontrolled coughing, breathing difficulties, stiff neck, irritability, poor food or fluid intake, or seizures.

\* *A health care provider must evaluate children with symptoms of severe illness before returning to childcare.*

If your child becomes sick during school hours, parents will be notified immediately. I ask that a parent or authorized caregiver pick up the child within thirty minutes of notification.

\*\*\***Heartworks Montana is not able to give refunds or credits for absences**. (***Children having extended absence due to illness/hospitalization or family emergency may be granted a tuition reduction. This is left to the discretion of the owner/Director of Heartworks Montana***)

There will be occasions when there is a family emergency, or I become ill and I am unable to provide service. You will be notified as soon as possible if this occurs. I would strongly suggest having back up childcare lined up for these times.

**Emergency Procedures:** To prepare staff and students in case of emergency, we conduct regular drills following emergency plans posted on fire evacuation plan. If we need to evacuate the school, we will relocate to the far back corner of the back yard, or next door to 428 North 9th, depending on reason for evacuation.

In the event of an emergency I will make every attempt to communicate with families as to our status/and or location. It is essential that your emergency contact information is accurate and updated as needed.

I am trained in CPR , First Aid and AED. My policy is to treat minor injuries (bumps, bruises, scrapes) on site and assess each situation. If I feel that a non-life threating injury needs more medical attention than I am qualified to give, then the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

If there is a life-threatening injury or sudden illness, then 911 or Poison Control will be notified immediately, as well as the parent/guardian.

**Medication Policy**: Staff at Heartworks Montana must have written authorization to administer prescription medication to a child while at school. Prescription medication must be in the original container with the specific instructions and dosage information from the doctor. A medical authorization form with the doctor’s signature must be completed before the medications can be administered. I will record the times and dosage given at school. Non-prescription medication will not be administered at Heartworks Montana, with the exception of sunscreen, diaper cream and lip balm and can only be administered with a signed consent form from the parent/guardian.

**Behavior Management Policies**: I believe that children who are being engaged and allowed to learn at their own pace with caring adult modeling and supervision are less likely to act out and cause disruption. Children will learn through example of how to respect and treat others and how to use the tools and toys around them. However in the case of a child acting out in manner that disrupts the class or causes harm to others, the child will be asked to move or be removed from the situation and given a space to calm their bodies until they are ready to return to the activity. When the child is ready to return to play they will be asked to/shown how to apologize if needed. They will also be given help to reenter play if needed. Children will be treated with kindness and respect regardless of the situation. There will be no shaming or exclusion from the classroom at any time.

If a child shows a repeating behavior that is disruptive and/or hurtful then the parents will be notified and we can work together, with the child, to create a strategy to avert this behavior in the future. If the behavior continues and others in the class, in my opinion, are in danger then the child may be asked to leave the program.

**Clothing/Diapers:** Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for both indoor and outdoor play each day and has appropriate sturdy footwear. During the winter and muddy months Children will need indoor shoes to wear in the classroom. These shoes can be left in their cubbie at school. In case of a spill or an accident, please make sure your child has a seasonally appropriate, complete change of clothes in their cubbie or backpack each day.

If your child is in diapers it is your responsibility to provide enough diapers and wipes for the child’s school day. Extra diapers and wipes may be left in your child’s cubbie.

**Outside Time/Physical Activity**: We go outside every day for at least thirty minutes, unless there is inclement weather. Please make sure

your child has appropriate outside gear for the season. I suggest waterproof pants, boots and mittens for the wet and cold seasons, as these will help your child enjoy their time outside. It is Heartworks Montana’s belief that outdoor physical activity is an essential part of your child’s day, promoting gross motor development and allowing our

bodies to get fresh air. If you feel your child is not feeling well enough to participate in an outdoor activity with their class, you will be asked to keep your child at home. I cannot leave a child unattended in the classroom while I am supervising play outdoors.

**Items From Home**: Heartworks Montana’s policy is that children keep all toys and personal items at home. I feel that our classroom has enough materials for all of the children to learn explore and play and toys from home only cause distractions and arguments. The exception to this rule is for theme related items or belongings that may help our learning. This items may be theme related puzzles, maps, books etc. Our monthly themes will be posted, please let me know if you have any items or expertise you would like to share.

**Transportation Policy & Trip Arrangements**: Heartworks Montana does not provide transportation. If a trip is planned, parents will be required to drop-off & pick-up your child at the destination. Preschool children may take regularly scheduled trips in town, and will get to and from the destination on foot. If there is a life-threatening situation 911 will be called, and the parents will be notified immediately.

**Safe Sleep Policy**: All childcare providers at Heartworks Montana will follow safe sleep recommendations for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), and the spread of contagious diseases:

1. Infants will always be put to sleep on their backs.

2. Infants will be placed on a firm mattress, with a fitted crib sheet, in a crib that meets the Consumer Product Safety Commission safety standards.

3. No toys, soft objects, stuffed animals, pillows, bumper pads, blankets, positioning devices or extra bedding will

be in the crib or draped over the side of the crib.

4. Sleeping areas will be ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. Infants will

not be dressed in more than one extra layer than an adult.

5. If additional warmth is needed, a one-piece blanket sleeper or sleep sack may be used.

6. The infant’s head will remain uncovered for sleep. Bibs and hoods will be removed.

7. Sleeping infants will be actively observed by sight and sound.

8. Infants will not be allowed to sleep on a couch, chair cushion, bed, pillow, or in a car seat, swing or bouncy chair. If an infant falls asleep anyplace other than a crib, the infant will be moved to a crib right away.

9.An infant who arrives asleep in a car seat will be moved to a crib.

10. Infants will not share cribs, and cribs will be spaced 3 feet apart.

11. Infants may be offered a pacifier for sleep, if provided by the parent.

12. Pacifiers will not be attached by a string to the infant’s clothing and will not be reinserted if they fall out after the infant is asleep. 13. When able to roll back and forth from back to front, the infant will be put to sleep on his back and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position.

14. In the rare case of a medical condition requiring a sleep position other than on the back, the parent must provide a signed waiver from the infant’s physician.

15. Our child care program is a smoke-free environment.

16. Our child care program supports breastfeeding.

17. Awake infants will have supervised “Tummy Time”.

\*This policy reflects the safe sleep research as of November, 2011

***Heartworks Montana’s mandatory reporting Policy***.

Any Director/teacher employed by Heartworks Montana is a mandatory reporter of abuse and neglect. Abuse or neglect, on behalf of the children in our care, will be immediately reported. The caregiver who initially suspected the abuse or neglect should personally report to Centralized Intake at 1-866-820-5437 within 24 hours."

Staff should become familiar with these policies below during their employment orientation, and should review them regularly. Written policies should also be reviewed periodically by the director/owner to make sure they reflect current best practices.

When an employee sees that a child has been abused, neglected, or has been placed in imminent risk of serious harm, the following steps shall be taken:

(a)   The employee shall immediately, upon having reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused, neglected, or placed in imminent risk of serious harm, or has had non-accidental physical injuries or injuries which are at variance with the history of such injuries, and in no case later than twelve (12) hours after having such a suspicion or belief, make an oral report by telephone or in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families or the local law enforcement agency.

(b)   The employee shall also immediately make an oral report to the Building Principal or his/her designee.  If the Building Principal or his/her designee is the alleged perpetrator of abuse/neglect then the employee shall instead notify the Superintendent.

 (c)   Within 48 hours of making an oral report, the employee shall submit a written report to the Commissioner of Children and Families, or his/her representative, containing all of the required information.

(d)   The employee shall immediately, submit a copy of the written report to the school director.

Any report made pursuant to this policy shall contain the following information, if known:

* the names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other persons responsible for his/her care;
* the age of the child;
* the gender of the child;
* the nature and the extent of the child’s injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
* the approximate date and time the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect occurred;
* information concerning any previous injury or injuries to, or maltreatment or neglect of, the child or his/her siblings;
* the circumstances in which the injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the reporter;
* the name of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
* the reasons such person or persons are suspected of causing such injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect;
* any information concerning any prior cases in which such person or persons have been suspected of causing an injury, maltreatment or neglect of a child; and
* whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, provide shelter or otherwise assist, the child.

For help reporting abuse/neglect, contact the Montana Department of Justice website: www.Dojmt.gov The information on this site is intended to help parents and caregivers understand how Montana’s communities respond to child victims, to educate you about what you and the child victim can expect after making a report of abuse and to offer other helpful resources.

Heartworks Montana Preschool



A place to grow in love & kindness

Parent Agreement Form

I/We have read the Heartworks Montana Handbook. I/We the parents/guardians of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ understand the policies and procedures of this handbook and I/We commit to uphold these policies and procedures.

Parents/Guardians Names (Please print)

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Signatures Date