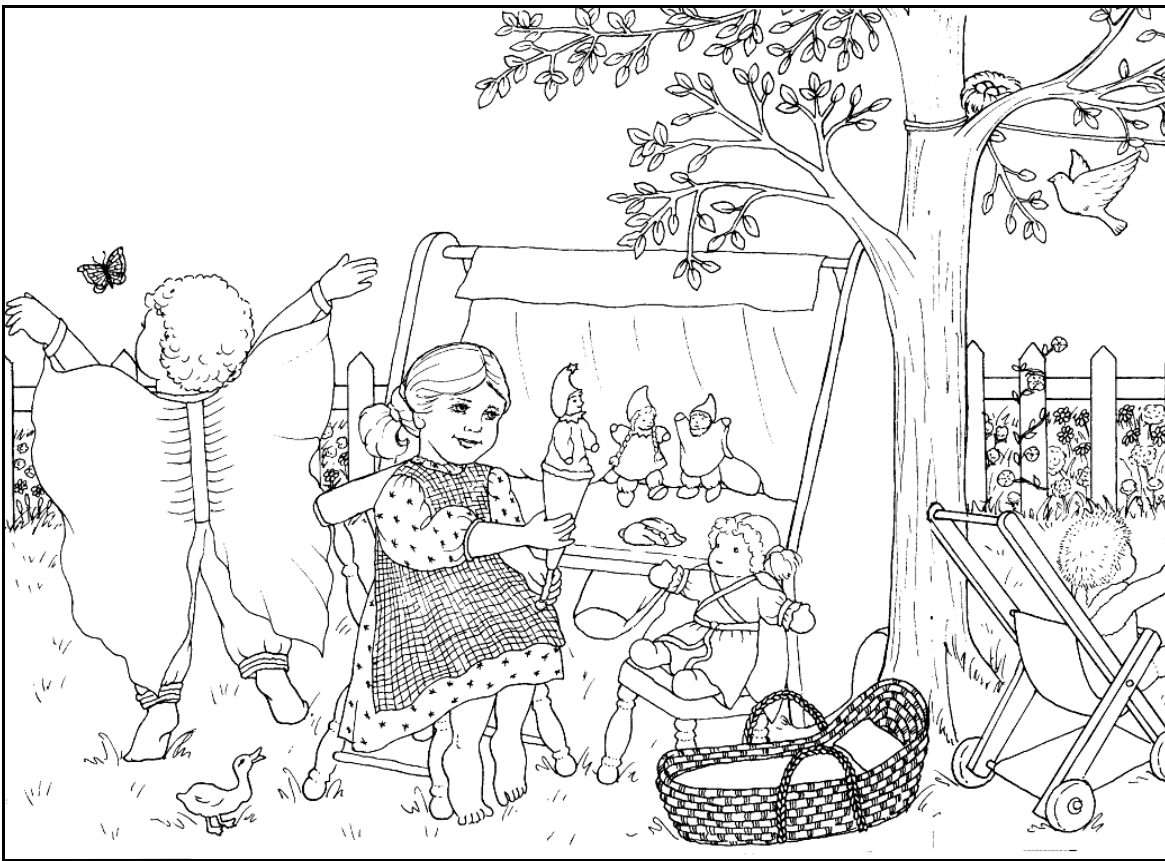


River Oak Charter School

# KINDERGARTEN PARENT HANDBOOK



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2021-2022



**This Book Belongs to:**

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to River Oak Charter School. We are a member of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, and as such, our school is guided by the core principles of Public Waldorf Education. For those of you who are new to the school, you are about to begin a new and exciting journey for you and your family.

The partnership we form is very important to the success of your child's education. Let us work together to form a mutual understanding and trust. There are many ways of doing this. I would like to take time to list some of the expectations I have which I believe will help to make the experience for you and your child richer. Please read this booklet thoroughly.

We can help each other by sharing our observations of your child. I will be the "eyes" and "ears" at school, and you the "eyes" and "ears" at home. Please write me a note or call me at home, should the need arise. Email works well too.

We need to keep our lines of communication open. However, I ask that you not bring up questions or concerns in front of your child. Parenting consciously and lovingly is a big task, but you are not alone in your endeavors. It is easier if we all work together. You will find that attending parent meetings regularly can also be of great support.



## STARTING AND ENDING THE DAY

### Teacher prep time is from 8:00 am – 8:20 am

- Even though I may be present, I am not available to take your child into the classroom until 8:20 am, because I am busy preparing for the activities of the day.
- However, you may take your child to the kindergarten playground at 8:00 am where your child will be supervised until school begins.

### School begins at 8:20 am

- Please be punctual; it benefits all of us for you and your child to be on time.
- If you are late, you will need to check in at the office first. Then, please take your child quietly into the kindergarten classroom. For the Golden Sun Kindergarten, please enter and exit through the outside door.

### Visiting the Kindergarten during the day

- If you would like to come to stay in the class, please make arrangements with us in advance of your visit. Please also remember to follow school protocol by signing the visitor registration log at the front office.

### Kindergarten ends promptly at 1:00 pm

- If your child is not picked up at this time, he or she will be escorted to aftercare (the Acorn Hut), and you will be expected to pay the aftercare fee.
- Also, please notify me beforehand if you will be picking up your child early.



## CLOTHING

- Children are busy and active in kindergarten, and clothing should be of the type that does not inhibit movement.
- Extra warmth is important as the weather gets cooler. On chilly mornings that turn to hot afternoons, layer your child's clothing.
- HATS are essential on cold, windy, or rainy days. Don't forget sun hats, too.
- Natural fibers, such as cotton and wool are especially beneficial as they allow your child's skin to breathe.
- Jewelry (including watches) is not appropriate in the kindergarten. Jewelry is often discarded or lost after arrival, and other children covet what they see others wear if they do not have the same thing. It can also prove hazardous, catching on things, or pinching when children jump and climb.
- Refrain from "media" clothing (T.V., movie, or toy characters).
- Refrain from skulls and other scary images on clothing. We want kindergarten to be an emotionally safe place for children.
- Help your child learn to snap, button, zip, and tie, if he or she does not already know how. Tying shoes is difficult at first for the younger children; however, I have seen that the older kindergarten children who have acquired these skills are the best "teachers."
- Girls should wear leggings or shorts under their dresses/skirts.
- No spaghetti straps. This is an all-school rule.
- Please periodically check your child's spare clothes bag.

## SHOES

Sneakers are the best shoes for children to wear. For girls, please consider that fancy shoes are not designed for running, jumping, or climbing, and they have slippery soles. Please, no slip-ons, flip-flops, or platforms; they limit play. Please leave "lighted" shoes at home; some children find them very distracting. "Crocs" can cause blisters, so they are best left at home too. Cowboy boots have heels and may push the foot forward. Thank you for taking these things into consideration.

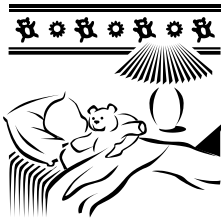
## RAINGEAR

Each child will need a long raincoat and rain boots. Rain hats are helpful because they don't impair vision and sound the way raincoat hoods do. We like to play outdoors every day, even in a little drizzle. When rain seems hard to predict, please do send raingear, but not umbrellas, because play is restricted with them in tow. Children who lack raingear may be able to borrow from our limited supply of outer garments. **Children without the proper clothing for the weather will be restricted to playing in the covered sandbox.**

## SELF CARE

- Teach your child how to blow his or her nose and to carry tissues.
- Children should be potty-trained and able to clean up after themselves before starting kindergarten. Please talk to me if you have concerns about this issue.

## REST



After observing children for many years, I can say unequivocally that a well-rested child is far happier than a child who is not getting enough sleep. Energy is a renewable resource only if we make sure our children are allowed plenty of sleep time. Sleep is the time the body and soul rejuvenate.

Summer routines are often different than school year routines, so I would suggest that before school starts, you begin to adjust your child gradually to earlier bedtimes and rising times so that the change will not be abrupt and tearful. Children of this age generally do well with 11 to 12 hours of sleep each night. Please let me know if your child has had less sleep, a troubling night, or difficult morning. That way I can offer more nurturing at school.

It may be helpful to strive for a consistent evening routine, such as dinner together at the same time (when possible), then a bath, then a story, songs, or lullabies, and then to bed at the same time each night.

## SICKNESS

- Please observe your child daily and learn those signs that say he or she needs to stay home. **Do not send your child to school if he or she:**
  - Has had a fever within the past 24 hours.
  - Has vomited within the past 24 hours.
  - Has greenish mucus, a much-clogged nose, or is coughing or sneezing. **If you are in doubt, call me, and we will discuss it.** All children get colds and should not stay home for the duration of the illness. Let us have a conversation if your child is in extreme discomfort.
  - Has head lice. Call your health care provider for remedies. Information is also available in the front office. If your child had head lice, he or she will be checked upon return to school.
- If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will rest in a quiet spot. You will be called (or your emergency contact) to pick up your child.
- Children on antibiotics must wait 24 hours after the first dose is taken before returning to school.
- Please tell the office and teacher if your child's health status has changed.



## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

- Please have your child at school every day unless he or she is sick. This allows me to know your child and for your child to know me and the other children. It is also very important for their development.
- If your child is absent, notify the school office by telephone every day he or she is out. Call 467-1855 extension 101. Leave a message if no one is able to take your call.
- It is important for you to be on time so that the class is not interrupted. However, if you are late, you will need to check in at the front office first.
- If you are planning to be away for any length of time, please let me know. Please notify the front office as well. Independent Study may be possible if you are willing, and if you will be gone for three or more days. I will need plenty of time to prepare your child's Independent Study packet. Please try to let me know at least one week before you leave.

## COMMUNICATION

- Please notify your child's teacher and the office when you have telephone, address, or email changes.
- The mailboxes outside of the classroom contain one folder for each child. Look for newsletters, paintings, and other important items here.
- We communicate via telephone trees, email, texting, and old-fashioned paper copies. Please let your child's teacher know which form(s) of communication you prefer.
- Announcements are posted on bulletin boards outside of the classroom.
- Parent night meetings are an essential means of communication between teachers and parents. You will learn about the curriculum, field trips, parenting skills, make presents for your child, and more. **Don't miss even one.**
- The class parent distributes a phone tree to each family in your child's class. It can be a successful means of communicating to the whole class.
- The school has an automatic dialing system to send important messages.
- If you have a difference of opinion with your child's teacher, please try to resolve the issue with the teacher before approaching the administrator or other school personnel.

## BIRTHDAYS IN THE KINDERGARTEN

Birthdays are very important in the kindergarten. Both parents are urged to attend their child's birthday celebration whenever possible. The date will be nearest to or on the child's actual birthday unless your child has a summer birthday. The ceremony takes about half an hour just before lunchtime. Your child's teacher will send you details when the time comes. If you are working, perhaps you can take this time from your lunch hour so you may attend.

The parent supplies a birthday treat, candles, and napkins. Children in the class make a "Birthday Book" for the birthday child, and I make a special gift. Please remember to bring a lunch for yourself, so that you can join the afternoon meal.

A week before the birthday, I will need the parent to write a short biography of their child's life, highlighting stages of development that were important, funny incidences, family outings, trips, and holidays, or whatever seems important and that young children can relate to. Also, please include the time of day or night the child was born, and what the weather was like. You might even like to bring me a few photographs.

I will tell the birthday story at the child's celebration. I ask that you refrain from taking pictures during this time, but I will make photo opportunities available afterwards.



### ***Birthday Verse***

(For the night before a child's birthday)

When I have said my evening prayer,  
And my clothes are folded on the chair,  
And my mother switches off the light,  
I'll still be \_\_\_\_ years old tonight.  
But with the dawning of the day,  
Before the children rise and play,  
Before the greenness turns to gold,  
Tomorrow I'll be \_\_\_\_ years old!  
\_\_\_\_ kisses when I wake.  
\_\_\_\_ candles on my cake.

### ***Birthday Verse***

(Morning of a child's birthday)

Please, everybody, look at me!  
Today I'm \_\_\_\_ years old you see!  
And after this I won't be \_\_\_\_  
Or 4 or 3 or 2 or 1,  
For that was when I'd first begun.  
Now I'll be \_\_\_\_ awhile, and then,  
I'll soon be something else again.  
\_\_\_\_ kisses when I wake.  
\_\_\_\_ candles on my cake

## **THE THREE R'S OF THE KINDERGARTEN: RHYTHM, REPETITION, AND REVERENCE**

### **Rhythm and Repetition**

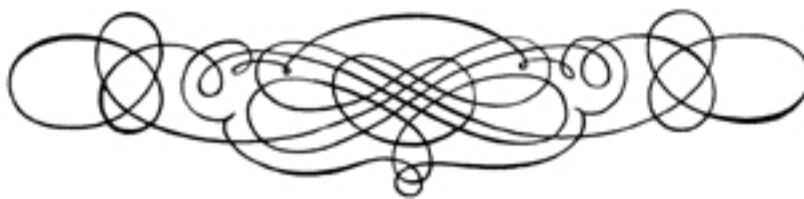
In the activities of the day, of the week, and in the festivals of the year we find rhythm and repetition. Rhythm and repetition lay the foundations for feelings of security, experience of affirmation, self-discipline, and the ability to make decisions in adult life. Having important daily events happen repeatedly at the same time each day is important – dinnertime at the same time, bath time at the same time, bedtime at the same time. Every day follow the same pattern as closely as possible. I would also like to remind you how important the transition from evening to bedtime is. A consistent evening “ritual” or way of transitioning is very important at this age. Nighttime is often a scary time for children, and this will help. There can also be a weekly rhythm such as a shopping day, a laundry day, etc.

### **Reverence**

This develops from the care, love, and devotion we have for each other, the things around us, and the environment in which we live. We foster reverence through giving thanks for what we eat, greeting the day, and how we part from one another at the end of the day.

### **The Yearly Rhythm**

We celebrate the festivals that bring to consciousness the changing seasons and cultural events. Food, decorations, candlelight, songs, and drama are a part of these celebrations. Parents are invited to attend these events, and I will send home advance notice with all the details.



## AN EXAMPLE OF THE DAILY KINDERGARTEN RHYTHM

8:00 – 8:20	Please take your child out to the garden, unless it is pouring rain. River Oak staff will watch over your child. Next, take your child's basket to his or her cubby and check in with the teacher.
8:20 – 8:30	Welcoming: The teacher meets children who are in the garden. Parents take children who are just arriving into the cubby area to put away their lunch basket, take off and hang up sweaters and jackets, and change into indoor shoes. If your child has a hard time with separation, we will work out a routine.
8:30 – 8:50	Morning Circle – We gather for our morning verse and greet the day and each other in song, movement, and poems.
8:50 – 10:00	Creative playtime— <b>our most important activity!</b> Monday – painting and washing Tuesday – drawing Wednesday – baking Thursday – soup making Friday – beeswax and nature walk
10:00 – 10:20	Clean-up, bathroom, hand washing, and rest time.
10:20 – 10:50	Snack time – the snack is cooked at school. Monday – rice day Tuesday – oat day Wednesday – millet day Thursday – soup day and bread from the day before Friday – popcorn day
10:50 – 12:10	Outside time – also gardening and nature walks
12:10 – 12:40	Story time: fairy/folk tales, birthdays, puppet plays, child's plays
12:40 – 1:00	Lunch – Please refrain from sending sugary or processed food.
1:00	End of kindergarten day

*\*This is an example of a kindergarten day, not necessarily what your child will experience in his or her class.*

## MEDIA, TELEVISION, AND THE ELECTRONIC AGE

This, of course, is a huge topic that I can only briefly review here. It is amazing that Rudolf Steiner forecasted many of the effects of media on young children, long before current researchers and child psychologists began to conduct their own studies on this subject.

Parents often ask, “How much is too much?” with respect to computer use, movies, and television viewing. I can only say that **any** television viewing, computer use, movie watching, videos or video games has no redeeming qualities whatsoever for the young child at this age. In the years that I have taught and observed young children, I have seen a remarkable increase in the following:

- Fears – nightmares, sleep-related problems, obsessive thoughts, anxiety, worry, nervousness
- Hyperactivity – children unable to concentrate, random running around, and aimlessness
- Inappropriate age-related behavior – Children who watch television and see a great deal of adult-oriented media events tend to speak, act, and play in ways that have left their natural and organic age behind, thus accelerating the maturation process. We now see many young ones, who may be 9 or 10, but they **act** like teenagers and consequently have many problems related to this.
- Changes to the body – Children are meant to be active, not passive couch potatoes. Children today are much less physically active. I see far more obesity and high blood pressure in children than ever before. I can actually tell if a child watches television or movies by their body language. It is often mechanical, nervous, and/or robot-like.
- Effects on the child’s imaginative forces and ability to play – Many people think that “educational” television, media, computer applications, etc., aid the child’s imagination. It is, in fact, just the opposite. Because the forces of imitation are so strong in the young child, those images and ideas, language and movements that are viewed by the child are soaked up and taken in by the child very deeply. They cannot shut them out the way an adult can. These images then become the motivating forces behind the child’s play. They are not of the child at all! They did not spring from the inner life of that child, but from some bizarre interpretation created by some Hollywood writer somewhere. If you think we are over-reacting, just watch Saturday morning cartoons sometime. The main objective is to sell products and toys related to the “show”. This especially victimizes little girls. Their play can be totally manipulated by what they watch. Boys, on the other hand, will come into the kindergarten full of aggressive gestures, mechanical movements, and

horrendous sound effects. You can imagine how this affects the classroom environment!

I have talked to many, many teachers about this issue both in the public and private sector. They all agree that the viewing of television, computers, and movies has had a profound effect on children's overall health and development at this age.

You may be asking, "Isn't it a matter of degree?" Well, yes and no. For the older child, (over eleven years old) an occasional movie that is **appropriate** is not going to damage the child. But I can only say this, from what I have observed: children who watch no movies or television or who play no video games, play, act and think in totally different ways than children who do. This is especially true for the young child.

There is much in today's world that we may not agree with, and a great deal that is out of our control. I am imploring you as parents to take a close look at this issue. This **is** an area where you have control. So give it some thought. Our children need all the humanizing experiences we can offer to help counter a world that is saturated with media.

Please be sensitive to what **you** are listening to on radio or television when your child is present, because this affects his or her play.

That is why a kindergarten using the core principles of Public Waldorf Education offers real activities: baking, woodworking, painting and gardening. This is also why I utilize as much natural material as possible. I believe in the preservation of childhood, and hope to nurture each child's unfolding. Let's work together as much as possible on this! If more clarification is needed, just ask.



## WAYS TO INTRODUCE YOUR MEAL

Hands together, hands apart, hands together, we're ready to start.

Earth who gave to us this food,  
Sun who makes it ripe and good,  
Dear Sun above, dear Earth below,  
Our loving thanks to you we show.

Kindly words are like honeycomb:  
Sweetness to our soul, health to our body.

Mother Earth to you we're singing.  
Listen to our song.  
Thanks for all the harvest bringing.  
Hear me when I sing to you, sing to you,  
Songs of rain and sunshine too. Ho-oh.

We thank thee for flowers that grow  
Beneath our feet, for tender grass so  
Fresh, so sweet. We thank thee. For hum  
Of birds and buzz of bee. For all the things  
We hear and see. Ohhh, oh, oh we thank thee.  
Ohoh, oh, oh we thank thee.

Thank you for the blossom.  
Thank you for the fruit.  
Thank you for the leaf and stem.  
Thank you for the root.

For health and strength and daily bread we give our daily thanks.

Bon appetite, now we may eat!



## THE IMPORTANCE OF BREAKFAST

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Children who eat a hearty, nutritious breakfast do better at school. It's hard to have a good day in kindergarten if you are hungry.

It can be a struggle getting your child out of bed early enough so that he or she can eat a good breakfast before going off to school. One way to help with early rising is getting your child to bed early (7:00 – 7:30 pm). This allows him or her to wake up more easily and gives you the time to have a sit-down breakfast.

If your child has any tendency towards over-activity or irritability, then it is critical for him or her not to consume sugar in the morning. Most cold cereals these days are made with lots of sugar, colored dyes, or preservatives. Please avoid cereals with high sugar content. Also limit fruit juice and smoothies, because they also metabolize too quickly. High sugar foods may provide quick energy, but they can make your child feel quite tired later on in the morning.

Any combination of the following foods is a great breakfast for your child. I recommend choosing whole grain cereals and whole grain breads.

- Bacon and eggs with toast
- Quesadilla or beans in a tortilla
- Breakfast burrito\*
- Tofu scramble
- Pigs-in-a-blanket (pancake or dough wrapped around sausage & baked)
- Sausage biscuit
- Slow-cooking oats
- Low-sugar granola or whole grain cereal
- Left-over dinner
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Peanut butter and banana sandwich
- Nut butter on toast
- Whole grain pancakes or waffles with unsweetened applesauce (waffles can be made and frozen ahead of time)
- Muesli breakfast bar\*\*



**\*Breakfast Burrito – makes 1 burrito**

½ cup chopped tomato	1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons chopped onion	1 flour tortilla, 6 inches in diameter
¼ cup canned corn	2 tablespoons salsa

In a small skillet, add the chopped tomato, onion and corn. Cook over medium heat until the vegetables are soft and the moisture is evaporated. Add the egg and scramble with the vegetables until cooked through, about 3 minutes.

To serve, spread the egg mixture in the center of the tortilla and top with salsa. Fold in both sides of the tortilla up over the filling. Then roll to close and serve.

**\*\* Muesli Breakfast Bars – makes 24 bars**

*These bars are easy to make ahead and are perfect for breakfast on the go.*

2 ½ cups old-fashioned oats	½ cup raisins
½ cup soy flour	½ teaspoon salt
½ cup fat-free dry milk	1 cup dark honey
½ cup toasted wheat germ	½ cup unsalted peanut butter
½ cup sliced almonds or chopped pecans, toasted	1 tablespoon olive oil
½ cup dried apples, chopped	2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 325° F. Lightly coat a 9x13-inch baking pan with cooking spray. In a small saucepan, stir together the honey, peanut butter, and olive oil over medium-low heat until well blended. Don't boil. Stir in the vanilla. Add the warm honey mixture to the dry ingredients and stir quickly until well combined. The mixture should be sticky but not wet.

Pat the mixture evenly into the prepared pan. Press firmly to remove any air pockets. Bake just until the edges begin to brown, about 25 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes, and then cut into 24 bars. When just cool enough to handle, remove the bars from the pan and place them on the rack to cool completely. Store, refrigerated, in airtight containers.

## MORNING SNACK

Every day, I will serve the children a nutritious morning snack along with herbal tea. On Thursdays, we make vegetable soup for our morning snack. On Thursdays you may wish to send a smaller lunch if your child is a big soup eater.

## SCHOOL LUNCH

Every day, parents pack a homemade lunch for their child. Food should be sent in a basket along with a cloth placemat and cloth napkin. If you wish to send a beverage, please send it in a thermos or other container with no pictures on it. To keep perishables cool, try wrapping a cloth with an ice pack in it around the food.

School lunches are often a frustration for parents. Here are some ideas to try when you tire of making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

- Natural peanut butter and honey on whole grain bread or crackers
- Soup in a thermos
- Unprocessed cheese
- Yogurt (with fruit or plain) – it does not need sugar
- Burritos
- Noodles with marinara or pesto sauce
- Baked chips and dip
- Sliced vegetables with ranch dressing
- Nuts or trail mix (without chocolate)
- Fresh fruit
- Boiled eggs (great if already peeled in a bag)
- Slice of pizza (freeze the rest of the pizza for later)
- Bagel with cream cheese
- Tuna fish pita pocket\*\*\*
- Egg salad sandwich
- Meat sandwich – sliced beef, turkey, ham (they do not need to be processed)\*\*\*\*
- Celery with peanut butter
- Sushi
- Veggie dogs

### **\*\*\* Tuna Fish Pita Pockets – makes 6 pocket halves**

*Canned tuna is a good source of protein and many vitamins and minerals.*

1 ½ cups romaine lettuce, shredded	¼ cup green onions, finely chopped
¾ cups tomatoes, diced	1 6-ounce can white tuna
½ cup carrots, shredded	¼ cup low-fat ranch dressing
½ cup green bell pepper, finely chopped	3 whole wheat pita pockets, halved
½ cup broccoli, finely chopped	

In a large bowl, add the vegetables. Toss to mix evenly.

In a small bowl, add the tuna and ranch dressing. Stir to mix well. Add the tuna mixture to the vegetable mixture and stir to combine.

Scoop ¾ cup of the tuna salad into each pita pocket half.

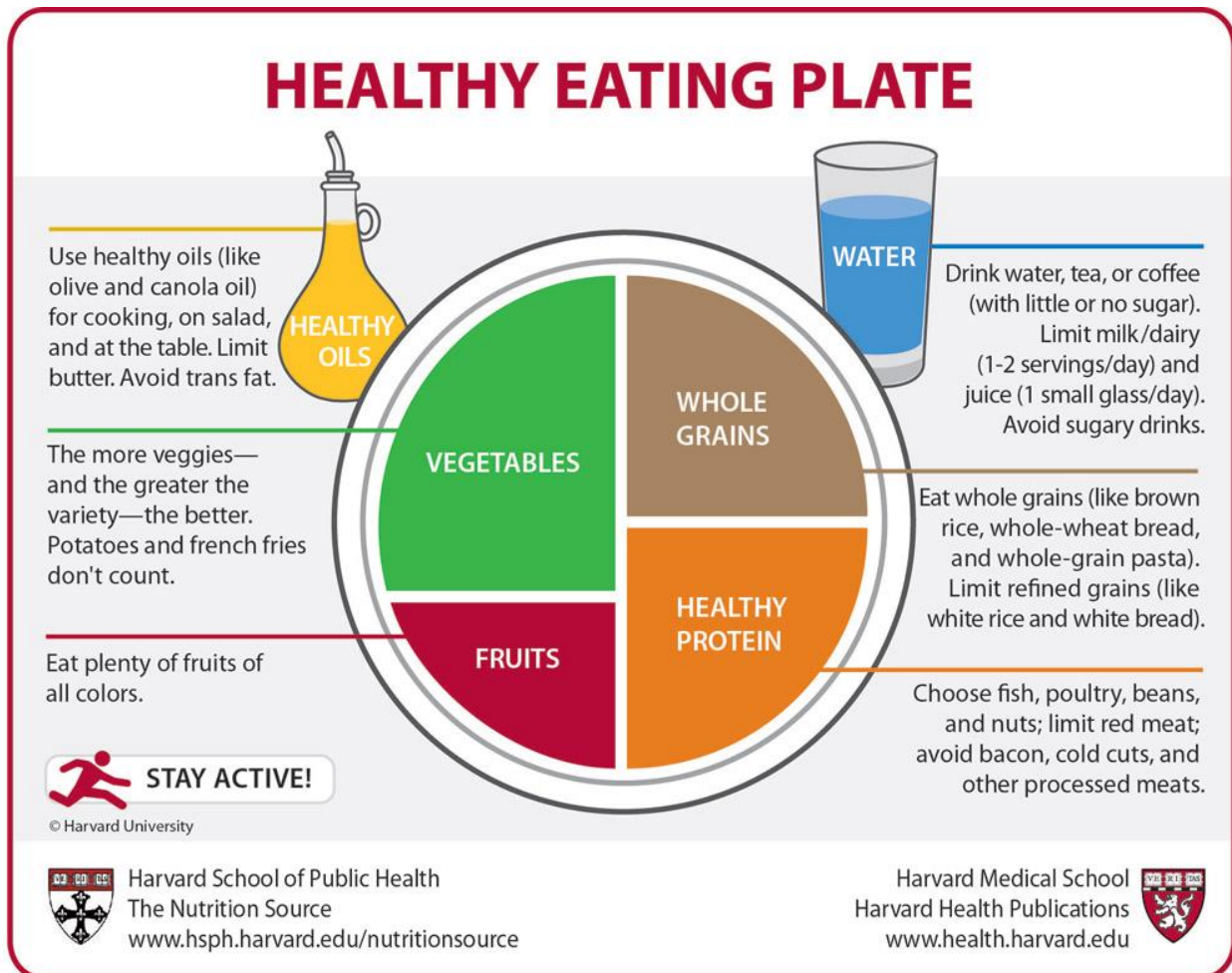
### **\*\*\*\* Healthy Meat Sandwich**

*Be creative and make your child's lunch more interesting. To make a healthy sandwich, choose one or more from the following:*

Turkey:	Roasted, sliced, or shaved – or substitute any lean protein
Whole grain:	Sliced bread, bun, roll, tortilla, pita, ciabatta, baguette, focaccia, naan, English muffin, bagel, flat bread, cracker
Spread or relish:	Mustard, low-fat mayonnaise, cranberry relish or other fruit spread, hummus, honey, pesto, peanut butter, salsa, low-fat refried beans, BBQ sauce
Toppings:	Lettuce, tomatoes, avocado, peppers (sweet, hot or spicy), celery, radishes, cucumbers, herbs, apple, pear, grapes, raisins, chopped nuts

## THE HEALTHY EATING PLATE

The Healthy Eating Plate was created by nutrition experts at Harvard School of Public Health and editors at Harvard Health Publications. The Healthy Eating Plate provides detailed guidance, in a simple format, to help people make the best eating choices.



The main message of the Healthy Eating Plate is to focus on diet quality. Use the Healthy Eating Plate as a guide for creating healthy, balanced meals—whether served on a plate or packed in a lunch box.

- The *type of carbohydrate* in the diet is more important than the *amount of carbohydrate* in the diet, because some sources of carbohydrate—like vegetables (other than potatoes), fruits, whole grains, and beans—are healthier than others.

- The Healthy Eating Plate also advises consumers to avoid sugary beverages, a major source of calories—usually with little nutritional value.
- The Healthy Eating Plate encourages consumers to use healthy oils, and it does not set a maximum on the percentage of calories people should get each day from healthy sources of fat.
- **Vegetables and Fruits**: Make ½ of your plate vegetables and fruits. Aim for color and variety, and remember that potatoes don't count as vegetables.
- **Whole Grains**: Make ¼ of your plate whole grains. Whole and intact grains – whole wheat, barley, wheat berries, quinoa, oats, brown rice, and foods made with them, such as whole wheat pasta are more nutritious for you. They also have a milder effect on blood sugar than white bread, white rice, and other refined grains.
- **Protein**: Fish, chicken, beans, and nuts are all healthy, versatile protein sources—they can be mixed into salads, and pair well with vegetables on a plate. Limit red meat, and avoid processed meats such as bacon and sausage.
- **Healthy plant oils**: Choose healthy vegetable oils in moderation like olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower, peanut, and others, and avoid partially hydrogenated oils, which contain unhealthy trans fats. Remember that low-fat does not mean “healthy”.
- **Drink water or herbal tea (coffee and caffeinated tea for adults)**: Skip sugary drinks, limit milk and dairy products to one to two servings per day, and limit juice to a small glass per day.



## PUPPET PLAY

(For those children going on to First Grade)

Before your child passes through the gate on a journey through the grades, I ask him or her to give a gift to those staying behind in the form of a puppet play. As this year progresses, please be thinking of your child and a fairytale, preferably which typifies your child's nature and/or his or her interest. You may use our puppets unless you prefer to make your own. The story **does not** need to be memorized, unless you would care to do so. I recommend the Pantheon translation of the Grimm's Fairy Tales. I can help you choose a story, and I would be happy to loan you a book, or you could find one at the library. I will be in contact with you to set a date for your child's puppet play performance toward the end of the school year.

Let me know how I can help in any way. As they work together, parents and children usually find this is a gift to each other as well as to the class. Keep the puppet plays very simple, and remember that I am here to help.





## RECOMMENDED READING FOR CHILDREN

### Selecting a book title

When you choose a book for your child consider the child's grade level, stage of development, and the child's interest in a particular subject. Many titles can be read aloud to a child, and then read by the child when older. The following list of authors and books may provide you with some ideas to start your own library or to borrow from the public library!

**Elsa Beskow:** Children of the Forest, The Sun Egg, Around the Year, Ollie's Ski Trip, Pelle's New Suit, Christopher's Harvest Time...

**Thornton Burgess:** The Adventures of Peter Cottontail, Old Mother West Wind, The Adventures of Lightfoot the Deer...

**Daniela Drescher:** Grimm's Fairy Tales, In the Land of Elves, Lily the Little Princess, Merlina and the Magic Spell...

**Gerda Muller:** Around the Oak, How Does My Garden Grow, The Story of the Snow Children, The Garden In the City...

**Maria Van Zeyl:** Goodnight, Hannah on the Farm

**Sibylle von Olfers:** The Story of the Root Children, The Princess in the Forest, The Story of the Snow Children...

### On line resources

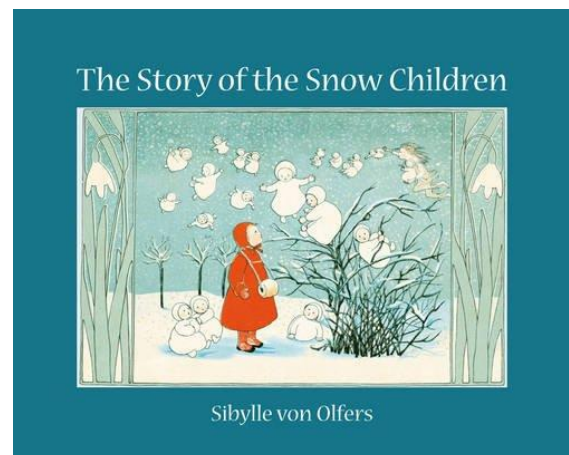
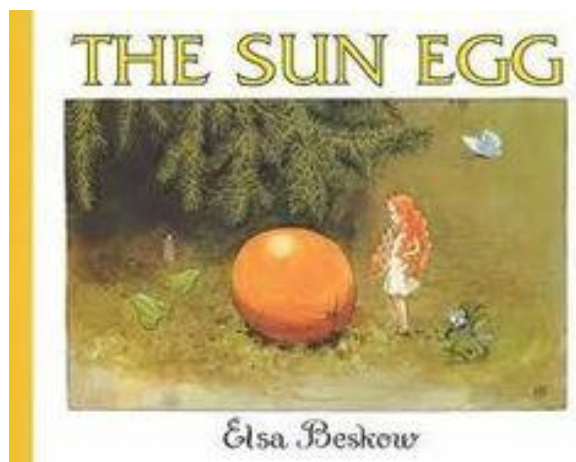
[www.waldorfbooks.net](http://www.waldorfbooks.net) Waldorf Books, the original Waldorf Bookstore

[www.steiner.presswarehouse.com](http://www.steiner.presswarehouse.com) Steiner Books

[www.waldorfpublishings.org](http://www.waldorfpublishings.org) Waldorf Publications

[www.bellalunatoys.com/waldorf-books](http://www.bellalunatoys.com/waldorf-books) Bella Luna Toys

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) search "Waldorf books for children"



## RECOMMENDED READING FOR PARENTS

As parents, you may wish to find books for your own reading delight and personal growth. Please look at the list below for ideas, or come to see me for specific recommendations.

Festivals Together, Sue Fitzjohn

The Well-balanced Child, Sally Goddard Blythe

You Are Your Child's First Teacher, Rahima Baldwin Dancy

Simplicity Parenting, Kim John Payne

Your Five Year Old, Sunny and Serene, Louise Bates Ames

Your Six Year Old, Loving and Defiant, Louise Bates Ames

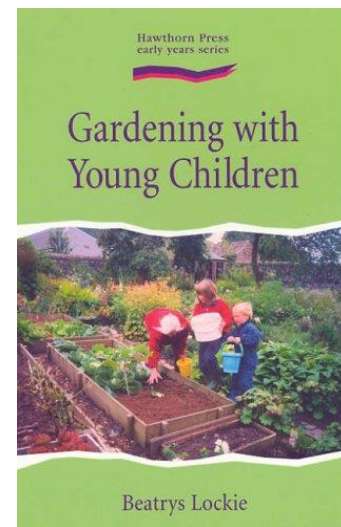
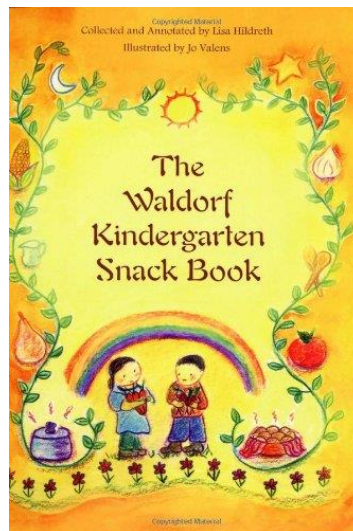
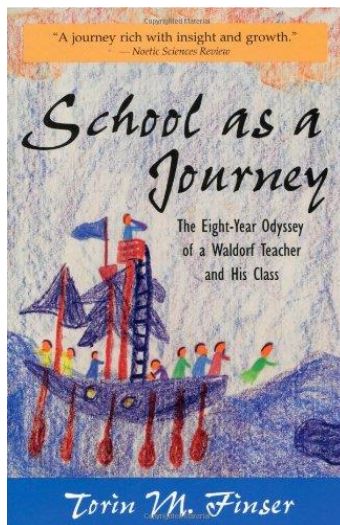
Storytelling with Children, Nancy Mellon

Gardening with Young Children, Beatrys Lockie

The Waldorf Kindergarten Snack Book, Lisa Hildreth

School As a Journey, Torin M. Finser

Make Way for Reading, Compiled & Edited by Karen Latimer & Pamela J. Fenner

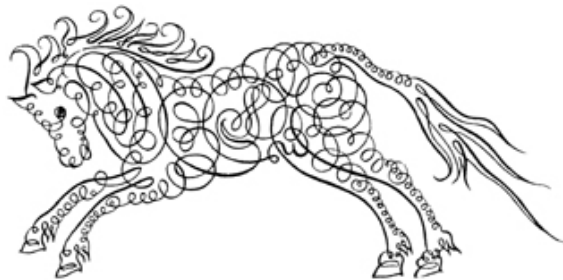
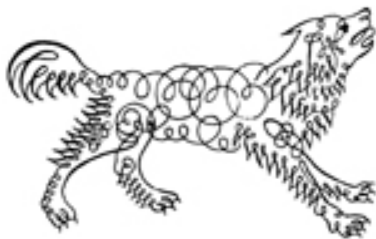




## MAKING UP STORIES

Making up stories is a great way to help your child through the issues of daily life. The following list has been compiled to help you make up your own.

Antelope – speed, grace, rapid advancement  
Bear – strength, introspection, self-knowledge  
Beaver – building, shaping  
Bee – service, gathering, community  
Buffalo – abundance, healing, good fortune  
Butterfly – transformation, balance, grace  
Cougar – balance, leadership  
Coyote – humor, trickiness, reversal of fortune  
Crow – council, wisdom, resourcefulness  
Deer – gentleness, sensitivity, peace  
Dolphin – joy, harmony, connection with self  
Dragonfly – skill, refinement, relentlessness  
Eagle – potency, healing, power, illumination  
Elk – pride, power, safe movement  
Fox – cleverness, subtlety, discretion  
Frog – cleansing, peace, emotional, healing  
Horse – freedom, power, safe movement  
Hummingbird – beauty, wonder, agility  
Moose – unpredictability, spontaneity  
Otter – joy, laughter, lightness  
Owl – wisdom, vision, insight  
Porcupine – innocence, humility  
Quail – protectiveness, group harmony  
Raven – mystery, exploration of the unknown  
Seagull – carefree attitude, versatility, freedom  
Snake – power, life force  
Turtle – love and protection, healing, knowledge  
Whale – creativity, intuition  
Wolf – teaching skills, cleverness



## PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Our school functions on the hard work of the teachers at River Oak **and** on the huge support from parents like you. It takes a village to run a school. I know, most of us have busy lives and work hard, but I am asking you to look at your volunteer time as a gift, and not a burden. It feels good to help and build community, and we respectfully ask for 20 hours of volunteer work per year for each of your children enrolled at our school. Please record your volunteer time in the “Volunteer Binder” which is located on the counter in the front office, or, at [riveroakcharterschool.org](http://riveroakcharterschool.org). Thank you.

Bonus! Did you know? The children of parents who volunteer are proud of their mothers’ and fathers’ work at school, and this helps to build the child’s self-image and increases his or her success as a learner.

There are many ways that you can volunteer your time, and I have listed some of them below. Please come to see me for other ideas as well. The sky’s the limit in terms of what you can do to help. Check in with me about ideas that you have, and I am sure we can make them happen.😊

**Parent night attendee:** joins other parents at special evening meetings hosted by the teacher. Topics of discussion might include Waldorf education, parenting strategies, nutrition, field trip planning, etc. Under the guidance of the teacher, parents might also make presents for their children.

**Class Parent:** provides support to the teacher by helping with organization and communication. This position calls for delegation, not doing everything yourself. Some duties include: phone tree, last minute calls to parents, reminding parents about volunteer hours, reminding parents who signed up to bring flowers and clean the classroom, and finding someone to bring snacks for parent nights. Many class parents also organize a celebration of the teacher on his or her birthday, at Holiday time, and/or at the end of the school year.

**Parent representative to the Parent Council:** attends monthly meetings of the Parent Council, finds parent volunteers to support the work of that Council, shares news from the meetings at parent nights.

**Fundraising:** organizes fundraisers for the class and might secure grants for new playground equipment, chairs, and cubbies—there are always needs.

**Field trip driver:** uses own vehicle to transport his or her own child and others’ children to field trip destinations (pumpkin patch, etc.). Drivers are subject to pre-approval by the front office staff, and they must provide proof of adequate insurance, a clean DMV driving record, and other documentation. Details are available from the office manager.

**Field trip coordinator:** assists teacher with scheduling and coordinating field trips, finding drivers, submitting required forms, and working with the office manager to assure that all requirements are met in a timely manner.

**Festival committee member:** helps with festivals throughout the year: setting up and cleaning up, finding people to help, and carrying out the needs of each festival (knighting ceremony, winter play, lantern festival, May Faire, etc.)

**Gardening coordinator:** once weekly, for a short amount of time, takes small groups of children to the garden to help turn over the soil, plant, weed, water, and hopefully harvest. Could develop rainy-day indoor activities that compliment the curriculum.

**Classroom projects:** If you want to contribute a special classroom project, just work it out with me. Projects might include: woodworking, sewing or other handcrafts, paper crafts, baking, etc.

**Work parties for the classroom and the school:** sign up to volunteer your skills and labor for work parties throughout the year.

**Room cleaners and clothes washers:** wash the cubbies, dust and oil the wood, clean the counters and stove/refrigerator. Take home the wash on Fridays, returning it first thing on Monday morning (it does not need to be folded).

**Grounds committee member:** attends periodic meetings to plan the physical development of the school—works on new projects, including the completion of the kindergarten playground.

**Friday walkers:** walk to the park with the teacher and the children—provide supervision as the children frolic.

**Painting set up and veggie choppers:** help set up for water color painting right away on Mondays, or help chop vegetables for soup on Thursdays.

**Bakers/cooking:** I frequently need extra baking done, and this is something which can be done at your convenience. Some of the baking is secret, whereas other times, this can be done with your child. It is also nice to have baking and cooking projects in the class with the children--they experience the process and then taste the yummy results when we are finished.

**Jump rope helper:** simply turn the jump rope for children who are practicing their skills in this area.

**Cutting/mending/sewing:** here are some ways to help from home during hours that are convenient for you: cutting painting and drawing paper, mending toys and costumes, and sewing new napkins.

## **VOLUNTARY DONATIONS**

We ask that you make a voluntary donation to the kindergarten of \$100 per year, and greatly appreciate it if you are able to help in this way. Some parents choose to pay all at once, while others pay \$10/month—this is up to you. In the past, donations have helped to purchase kitchen play stoves and refrigerators, wee little ones for each child, dolls for puppet plays, and furniture and supplies for the classroom. We choose to buy fine wooden toys and the most natural, high quality art materials for your child, so he or she can have a full sensory experience through hands, heart, and head. If you are able, please help us to create this magical place for your child. Thank you.

**THE INTAKE MEETING:  
A DISCUSSION WITH NEW KINDERGARTEN PARENTS**

1. An overview of Waldorf Education
2. Our non-academic kindergarten program
3. Enrollment in our two-year kindergarten program (if applicable)
4. Do you know any of the children in the class?
5. The children who will be in your child's class next year
6. Has your child attended school before now? How was that?
7. Home visits
8. Parent Nights
9. Volunteer 20 hours per year for each child enrolled at River Oak
10. Donate \$100.00 for classroom supplies—all at once or a little at a time—whatever works. Please remember that donations are voluntary and are only expected from those families who are able to contribute. Thanks.
11. Daily schedule (rhythm), grains of the day, and activities
12. Festivals
13. Discipline at school
14. Impact of television and the media on the young child

## **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

Please take time to read the following synopsis of the curriculum that we use at River Oak, and you will discover the exciting journey that awaits you and your child from kindergarten through eighth grade. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

### **Kindergarten**

**Math:** One to one correspondence will be developed within the context of work and play. Counting will be done from story or song. Children will work with color and size differentiation, again within the context of their play.

**Literature and Grammar:** Children will be exposed to literature through fairy tales and folk tales from around the world presented orally and/or through puppet plays. They will also be involved in their own productions. The instructor, with appropriate movement and song as accompaniment, will also present narrative poetry and nature stories. Rhyming and alliteration will be emphasized through creative song.

**Science:** Nature stories, nature walks, gardening, basic understanding of the change of seasons, and days of the week.

**Music:** Singing, exposure to kinder-harps and the Choroí glockenspiel as well as simple percussion instruments, a broad presentation of songs throughout the history of this country and in a variety of different languages.

**Art:** Weekly watercolor painting, beeswax modeling, coloring, and various crafts, including woodworking.

**Foreign Language:** Spanish through songs, games, and stories. Parents are encouraged to come into the class to offer songs in other languages as well.

**Handwork:** Finger knitting and sewing.

**History and Social Studies:** Multicultural stories from around the world as well as discussions about the importance of family.

### **First Grade**

**Math:** Qualities of numbers and introduction to the four operations of arithmetic: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division.

**Literature & Grammar:** Pictorial and phonetic introduction to letters, fairy tales from around the world, poetry recitation, word families.

**Science:** Nature stories, nature walks, observations, and gardening.

**Music:** Singing, and pentatonic flute.

**Art:** Form drawing, watercolor painting, beeswax modeling, and crayon illustrations.

**Foreign Language:** Spanish through plays, songs, rhythms, and games.

**Handwork:** Knitting.

**History and Social Studies:** Multicultural stories.

### **Second Grade**

**Math:** Continue with four operations of arithmetic, story problems, counting by 2, 3, 4, and 5; begin multiplication tables.

Literature and Grammar: Elements of grammar (nouns, verbs, adjectives); cursive writing; animal fables, hero stories, and legends from around the world.

Science: Garden and nature studies; field observation.

Music: Singing, and pentatonic flute.

Art: Continue form drawing, watercolor painting, beeswax modeling.

Foreign Language: Spanish continued: plays, songs, poetry, games, and simple conversation.

Handwork: Knitting patterns.

History and Social Studies: Multicultural stories.

### **Third Grade**

Math: Higher multiplication tables, continue work with four processes, weights, measures, length, volume, money, time, and simple fractions.

Literature and Grammar: Elements of grammar (nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, and contractions), sentence structure, continuing cursive writing, punctuation, compositions, stories from ancient history, written reports, and oral presentations.

Science: Continuation of garden and nature studies (ecosystems).

Music: Singing, lyre, and pentatonic flute.

Art: Continue form drawing, watercolor painting, and beeswax modeling.

Foreign Language: Spanish continued: songs, plays, poetry, and conversation.

Handwork: Crochet, spinning, weaving, and dyeing

History and Social Studies: Study of practical life: farming, house building, clothing, and cooking.

### **Fourth Grade**

Math: Higher multiplication tables, four digit multiplication, long division, fractions, measurement, introduction to decimals.

Literature & Grammar: Elements of grammar, continuing cursive writing, punctuation, book reports, creative writing, writing strategies (paragraphs, central ideas, prewriting, drafting, revising, editing), narrative writing, response to literature, informative report writing, summary writing, Norse mythology, The Kalavala, historical novels, and Native American stories.

Science: Zoology and continuation of nature studies.

Music: Singing, violin, and recorder.

Art: Advanced form drawing, painting, and beeswax modeling.

Foreign Language: Spanish basic grammar and verb conjugation.

Handwork: Cross-stitch and embroidery.

History & Social Studies: California and local history.

Geography: California and local geography, map making.

### **Fifth Grade**

Math: Decimals, fractions, metric system, and introduction to geometry.

Literature and Grammar: Elements of grammar, continuing cursive writing, punctuation, organized compositions, Ancient culture myths (India, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, and Greece), book reports, research reports, and presentations.

Science: Botany, garden and nature studies.

Music: Singing, recorder, strings, woodwinds, and brass.

Art: Calligraphy, watercolor painting, and clay modeling.

Foreign Language: Spanish continued (grammar, tense, and reading).

Handwork: Four–needle knitting (hats, socks, and mittens).

History and Social Studies: Ancient civilizations through Greek times.

Geography: American geography as related to vegetation, agriculture, culture, and economics.

### **Sixth Grade**

Math: Algebra, ratios, proportions, and geometric drawing with instruments.

Literature and Grammar: Composition, grammar, spelling, biographies, and book reports.

Science: Mineralogy, geology, physics (acoustics, electricity, magnetism, optics, and heat), beginning astronomy, nature studies.

Music: Singing, recorder, strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

Art: Calligraphy, watercolor painting, clay modeling, and woodwork.

Foreign Language: Spanish continued (grammar, reading, and writing).

Handwork: Hand–sewn animals and dolls.

History and Social Studies: Roman and Medieval history.

Geography: North America and South America.

### **Seventh Grade**

Math: Algebra, mathematical thinking/theory, problem solving, and geometry.

Literature and Grammar: Creative writing, poetry, grammar, spelling, punctuation, classical literature, formal composition, and book reports.

Science: Physics (mechanics), anatomy/physiology (circulatory, respiratory, reproductive, and nervous systems), astronomy, inorganic chemistry, health/nutrition, and nature studies.

Music: Singing, recorder, strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

Art: Calligraphy, clay modeling, watercolor painting, perspective drawing, oil pastels, and Renaissance art.

Foreign Language: Spanish continued (conversation, short essays, grammar, reading).

Handwork: Hand–sewn clothing.

History and Social Studies: end of the Middle Ages, the Age of Exploration, and the Renaissance.

Geography: Europe and Asia.

Technology: Computers introduced (research and word processing).



## **Eighth Grade**

**Math**: Practical applications of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and stereometry.

**Literature and Grammar**: Creative writing, formal composition, grammar, spelling, short stories, poetry, and Shakespearean drama.

**Science**: Physics, organic chemistry, anatomy/physiology (muscular, skeletal, optical, and aural), meteorology, and nature studies.

**Music**: Singing, recorder, strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

**Art**: Calligraphy, sculpture, painting, perspective drawing, charcoal drawing, portraits, oil pastels, and modern art.

**Foreign Language**: Continue in Spanish (practical conversation, grammar, reading, and essay).

**Handwork**: Machine-sewn clothing.

**History and Social Studies**: Elizabethan England, world economics, the Age of Reason, the Industrial Revolution, and U.S. History to present.

**Geography**: Africa and world geography.



*You may wish to clip the list below and take it along when you go shopping.*



### CHECK LIST FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- \_\_\_ 1 Lunch basket
- \_\_\_ 1 cloth napkin
- \_\_\_ 1 cloth placemat
- \_\_\_ 1 vegetable every Thursday (soup day)
- \_\_\_ 1 apron to stay in the cubby

Ask us for a simple pattern if you need one. Please make straps long enough to wrap around and tie in front. Please make them out of denim or heavy cotton. We use the apron often for baking, cooking, and painting.

- \_\_\_ 1 pair of indoor shoes to stay in the cubby. A solid color is preferred.
- \_\_\_ 1 cloth bag with extra clothes to stay in the cubby:  
*Please replenish clothes as needed and check the bag for appropriate seasonal items at mid-year and springtime.*
  - ☐ Underwear
  - ☐ Socks
  - ☐ Long pants
  - ☐ Shirts
  - ☐ Sweaters or sweat shirts
- \_\_\_ Rain boots
- \_\_\_ Rain coat
- \_\_\_ Warm hat
- \_\_\_ Sun hat
- \_\_\_ Mittens

