



## Acorn Class Guidelines

6 weeks - 23 months

The Treehouse: A Forest Garden School follows a RIE (Resources for Infant Education) pedagogy in our Acorn Class. This is called the Educaring™ Approach and it allows the teachers (and parents!) to focus on what matters most: the connection between caregiver and baby. In attuning to the baby, we learn to trust their development process and care for them on an intuitive level. Please see these resources below for further information on this approach.

[Magda Gerber](#) is the founder of [Resources for Infant Educators](#), usually referred to as RIE, an organization that continues to teach her educaring ideas to parents and caregivers. [Here](#) is an article that sums up the approach and principles quite succinctly!

[Baby Led Adventures](#) by Janet Lansberry. Janet studied with Magda Gerber and is a leading voice in the RIE pedagogy. You can find her [website and podcast called Unruffled](#) and her pages on FB and IG as well. She is an invaluable resource!

### Daily Log

Teachers will fill out a daily log for parents to check at pick up that will give information on your child's feedings, diaper changes and naps. We ask that you use this log to jot down any peculiar or new behaviors that happened since last time they were in our care, including:

- Notable bowel movements
- Did they start to roll over, crawl, stand, scoot etc...
- New sleeping or eating patterns
- Any signs of illness
- Any signs of teething, and plans for soothing them
- Any other notable events happening that differs from routine (out late to dinner the night before, grandparents visiting, etc)

### Parent Communication

Teachers will rarely be available to communicate with parents during the school day, as their attention needs to be on the students in their care. However, we will try our best to take photos and connect quickly if need be through our Remind App. You will be invited to join The Acorn Class through Remind, and this is how you will get school messages and can have conversations with teachers. Daily logs, emails, parent conferences and conversations at pickup and drop off are available for parent connection as well!

We also will invite you to join your child's "Google Photo Album" where you will get to see snapshots of your child's day through photos and videos!

## **Open door policy**

We have one! However, we do ask that you request a visit beforehand so we can coordinate a good time to visit and we have a plan for if your child should see you or not.

## **Breastfeeding**

We welcome Mamas to come and nurse their baby if this works for their schedule and baby's needs. We will make a plan with you beforehand on how to communicate and plan for nursing sessions. We have a common space that can be used in the community center and is available most days. It's quaint, but it is quiet! However, every 3 weeks on a Friday, the community center is being used for food distribution.

## **Bottle Feeding:**

We ask that a baby has already been introduced and takes a bottle well for at least 2 weeks before starting in our care, if that is how they will be eating during the day. If you need to arrange times to come in to nurse please let us know and we will work with you on this (see above). We have a sink designated for bottle preparation and a bottle and food jar warmer that will be used.

**Breastmilk:** We follow the CDC's guidelines on [Proper Storage and Preparation of Breast Milk](#).

All breast milk needs to have the date expressed and the child's name written on it. If the milk was previously frozen, we need to know when it came out of the freezer, as this milk is only allowed for 24 hours. When you arrive in the morning we ask that you place the labeled milk in our mini fridge. Please bring at least 2 bottles in addition to any storage bottles or pouches needed to store milk.

**Formula:** If your child uses formula you need to provide at least 2 bottles, labeled with your child's name and average oz consumed at one feeding and formula still in its original container. You may leave your formula at the school.

## **Food:**

If your child eats food you are asked to bring in a labeled, full day's supply, each day they are in care along with utensils and bibs. Dry foods can be kept at school, with your child's name and average consumption written on it. Food can be stored in our mini fridge and warmed in our bottle and food jar warmer. Please make sure any prepared food is either stored in the quantity they will eat or includes a separate serving plate/bowl. Once a spoon is dipped into a food jar, that food jar needs to be discarded after that meal, so we want to eliminate waste!

## **Drop Offs:**

It is important for parents to create a consistent goodbye routine, and leave promptly after. Linger only confuses the child and leads to more distress. Your word is your bond. If you say you are leaving, follow through; children will gain trust this way. Be mindful that having longer conversations with teachers may be better at pick up because of this.

## **Unsettled Child:**

We have a general time frame of 30-45 mins if a child is exhibiting separation anxiety, distress or constantly crying and unable to be soothed. We will work to calm the baby before calling parents to pick up, but will never allow a child to be unsettled in our care for too long. It is important for children to have positive experiences in our care over the first couple

weeks so they can gain trust. Some children will offer up their trust more readily than others. If you have a feeling that your baby will have separation anxiety please tell us so we can make a plan for an integrated schedule the first week or two until they get settled.

It is important to note that ratios are very important to maintain and teachers need to be available for other children in care as well.

## **Safe sleep**

We follow all "[Safe Sleep](#)" guidelines for infants (11 months and under) put out by the Early Learning Division, Office of Childcare. Please read over this article on [Communicating Safe Sleep Practices with Families](#). All infants will be placed in a crib. All toddlers, (12 months and older) will be placed on a floor mat. The school provides a sheet and mat for each child. Please bring in sleep sacks for infants and sleep sacks or a blanket for toddlers. They may also have other attachment items like 1 lovie or \*pacifier.

Please review this handout on [Sleep Sacks](#) to prepare yourself for what types are allowed in our care, as some "specialty" sacks are not "sleep safe".

We ask that all infants come with 2 sleep sacks each day in case one gets soiled.

All infants will be placed on their back for sleeping unless parents provide a medical note and further instructions regarding a different position that is necessary. Infants that can roll over are welcome to sleep how they choose.

While sleeping, \*infants may use a pacifier but not one that is attached to a lovie or blanket. All children must wear sleep sacks or swaddles instead of blankets, avoiding any suffocation hazards in the crib and allowing the child's reflex to wake them up if they are suffocating.

To help promote healthy sleep habits unattached to falling asleep at the bottle or breast, we encourage families to use the pattern of [Play - Sleep - Eat](#).

## **Daily Rhythm**

The Rhythm for our infants and toddlers will evolve as the school year goes on and our little ones grow up! The infants (11 months and under) eat and sleep on demand and based on the specific stage they are in. The toddlers (12 months and older) will start to settle into a more consistent routine of only 1-2 naps a day and meals at set times. The teachers will work to meet each child's needs while working with the whole class on finding a rhythm that includes outside play, eating, sleeping and indoor playtime.

## **Emergency Exit procedures**

In addition to the Emergency Procedures in the Parent Handbook, the Acorn class will exit the school in a unique way! In order to leave the schoolhouse promptly and safely in the case of an emergency, up to 4 children will be placed in an "Evacuation Crib" strolled through the Oaks classroom and out onto the back ADA ramp. Depending on the emergency and weather, the children will go to the covered space at the church, inside the church's infant room or into our outdoor classroom. These cribs are our normal cribs used in the class and have been designed to fit through doorways and have large, heavy duty castors and wheels.

## **Please bring the following each day**

Our cubby area is on the smaller side and some hooks will be shared with children that have the opposite schedule as you. Please bring home your diaper bag each day and make sure it's ready for the following school day!

- ❖ 2 sleep sacks (blankets are allowed for children 12 months and older)
  - These can stay at school and will be sent home once a week with your child's sheet to be washed.

- ❖ Any attachment item they need for sleeping or during the day. Please limit to one smaller item.
- ❖ 3 full change of clothes
  - In the cold, wet months please dress your little one in layers, with a wool underlayer so their body temperature will remain regulated from outside to inside play.
- ❖ Hat (according to weather) We recommend the balaclava style for colder months.
- ❖ Burp cloths as needed (some babies need more than others - you know your baby!)
- ❖ Food for the whole day:
  - 2 labeled bottles and breastmilk or formula
  - Baby food (We have limited refrigerated space, so please bring refrigerated food daily but dry foods can stay at school)