

## **Welcome to Constellations!**

It is our passion to engage curious hearts, hands and minds in nature and play-based learning. Learning happens both through discovery and direct instruction. Each week's activities are centered around a curricular theme, and our small size gives us the flexibility to embrace organic learning opportunities as they arise. The majority of our day is spent outdoors.

Our daily rhythms include opportunities to collaborate and work independently, to participate in a structured activity and engage in free play, to teach others and to integrate through the senses.

At Constellations, the day unfolds in a predictable and rhythmic manner. By creating a natural environment full of creativity and love, children engage in a wide range of activities to support their growth and development, making their present lives richer and preparing them for the opportunities that lie ahead.

We hope this handbook will serve as an introduction to our program and provide you with information and ideas that we feel are important for your child's environment, development and well-being. Feel free to ask us any questions you may have. Thank you!

Administrative Director: Juliana Ciano

(505)428-8330

[connect@constellationslearningsantafe.com](mailto:connect@constellationslearningsantafe.com)

## **Mission statement**

Our mission is to provide a nurturing environment where the imagination and developing child can engage in new opportunities that nurture their growth.

## **Calendar**

Constellations will begin September 25 and meet consistently through December 15th, with no school November 22-24th.

We will resume Wednesday, January 3rd through May 22nd, with Monday, February 19th off and one week break from March 25-29th.

For children 5+, this homeschool support program totals fewer curricular days than the required state minimum of 180 per year, and as such, all families must also sign a homeschool waiver stating that one parent possesses a high school diploma or equivalent and will provide the total of 180 days of instruction to their children.

## **Arrival**

Please drop-off and pick up your child/ren on time at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. or 3:15 p.m.

Please send your child/ren fed and dressed appropriately for the range of weather the day may offer. For everyone's safety, please approach and depart slowly in your vehicle. If another person beyond parents is to pick up your child, please provide notification in writing or text message.

## **Curriculum**

We provide a multi-sensory learning environment characterized by a dependable routine and a majority of our time spent outdoors. In our program, movement, exploration and collaboration are emphasized as pathways to age-appropriate academic curiosities. Curriculum draws on elements of wildschooling, Waldorf, Montessori and Reggio while maintaining academic balance with age appropriate Common Core competencies.

## **Mealtimes**

Meals are an integrating time in our school. We prepare a space together, and the children help in the setting/cleaning work while a family-like environment is cultivated. Although all children in the program are offered a hearty snack as part of their morning, parents are responsible for sending lunch for their children. Please do not send candy, juice, desserts, or sugary snacks.

## **Festivals/Seasons/Birthdays**

School will follow the rhythm of the seasons and tailor activities to the natural offerings of each. Special holidays and festivals may be celebrated throughout the year from various cultural and

religious traditions. It is our goal to offer children ways to connect with and understand the passage of time and our place in history; celebrations are offered as opportunities to learn and share together, and neither religious nor cultural agendas are pushed. For your child's birthday, you will be invited to a simple celebration and are welcome to bring a birthday treat to share. Should the birthday fall on a weekend or during vacation time, arrangements can be made for a convenient day for the family and school.

### **Allergies or dietary concerns**

We strive to provide whole-food snacks for the children during the day. If your child has food allergies or specific dietary guidelines that you would like us to follow, please speak with us as soon as possible. We will work with you to provide an appropriate snack, keeping in mind your child's needs and the needs of the group.

Water and/or herbal tea will be provided and made readily available for all children.

### **Clothing**

The best clothing for school is sturdy, comfortable and unrestricting. During the cooler weather months, warm clothing with under and over layers are essential. This includes long johns, warm socks (extra pairs), hats, mittens, and snow or rain pants. Please send sunhats and/or winter hats for outdoor play. We will spend most of our days outdoors except in extreme weather circumstances. Please put sunscreen on your children before they arrive as needed.

We try to provide your child with a full and active experience, so please understand if we send you home with a muddy or dusty child at the end of the day. Please label all clothing, jackets, and hats.

Slippers, or inside shoes, help the children transition from outside to inside, keep mud out, keep feet safe, and also make for a comfortable/warm play indoor time. Please ensure they are not slippery on the bottom and are easy for your child to change into.

Plan to provide an extra of the following to live at school, labeled with your child's name:

Sun hat, warm hat, socks, indoor slippers or shoes, mittens and water bottle.

### **Guidance/Discipline**

Predictable guidance is essential for a healthy environment for young children. It is our goal to support each child to participate within a group and regulate with guidance as needed. If the children cannot resolve a challenging situation on their own, various techniques will be used including:

- o Change of environment/stimulation
- o Opportunity for snack, rest or a quiet activity

- o Guidance by an instructor/administrator through conversation
- o Guidance to a different area to work alongside an instructor/administrator

### **Tuition and Fees Policy**

Tuition is consistent each month regardless of scheduled days off or the child's sick days.

For the half-day program, tuition is \$880/month plus gross receipts tax.

For the full-day program, tuition is \$1455/month plus gross receipts tax.

For 2023, payments are due by Sept 25, Nov 1, Dec 1, Jan 1, Feb 1, Mar 1, April 1 and May 1.

Tuition is to be paid by the first of each month and no later than the 5th. A late fee of \$50 will apply to all payments made the 6th and after. Cash, check and electronic transfer are all acceptable forms of payment.

### **Sick Days/Make-up**

Please communicate absences via text to Juliana at 505.428.8330 as soon as you are aware of them. Tuition is not pro-rated for absence. If extenuating circumstances arise, please communicate with Juliana about your situation.

A child who is not well needs to be cared for in the warmth and quiet of their own home. Please do NOT send your child to school if they have experienced any of the following in the past 24 hours:

- Fever
- Coughing/Hoarse Voice
- Diarrhea/Vomiting
- Contagious Rash
- Any symptoms of contagious diseases

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are their child's most important teacher. Research has proven that children are more successful learners when their parents are actively involved in their learning, both at home and at school. To support parents as partners, we encourage families to be involved in their child's experience. Constellations offers an open door policy, allowing parents to visit and participate in our programs at all times, fostering a sense of openness and inclusion. We also allow parents to participate in the school by sharing a skill with the class, planning events, joining our group singing or volunteering in other activities.