

# Seasons Path

An In the World Program



PARENT HANDBOOK  
2023-2024

## Welcome To A New Year of Seasons!

To those of you who are new, we extend a warm and heartfelt welcome! To those of you returning, welcome back! We feel that Seasons is a special place for all of us and we are looking forward to working with you. We want to invite you to take some time to read this handbook completely and orient yourself to the many details involved in making Seasons Path the community that it is. In the interest of clarity and smooth operation, we have set forth many basic policies that we think you will find easy to understand. By carefully reading this handbook, you will have a more complete understanding of our needs and expectations, which will enable us to better meet your needs. We appreciate your attention to the information contained in these pages and are excited to begin another beautiful year dancing through the seasons with you. Blessings to all.

~Annie and Erin



## Communication



It won't be long before you notice the busy buzz of our joyful days and we want to take a moment to introduce you to the systems we have set up to facilitate transition times and communication between us all.

**Your Child's Status** If you have something you need to communicate to the mentors regarding your child's day, please take a moment during drop-off to pass the information on. Examples of important information to share might be a change in routine, a different person picking up your child, etc.

**A Concern Or Question** If you have any concerns or questions that do not need immediate attention, please text Erin or Annie. We will respond as soon as possible.

**Changes At Home** If something has occurred at home that you feel will affect your child, drop-off is the best time for a quick check-in with the program mentor. We ask that you remain mindful of the mentors' need to be attentive to all parents and children present.

Please keep these conversations brief and plan for them by arriving well before your drop off time. If you would like to meet at length with your child's mentors, an appointment can be arranged. Parent/Lead Mentor conferences are also scheduled by the staff twice a year.

**Contacting Annie Or Erin** the best way to reach Annie and Erin is via phone:

**Annie 805-252-9075. Erin 805-448-2051.**

Notes for Annie or Erin as well as tuition checks need to be given to the staff person at drop off or pick up, to put in our files. Please be patient when sending email messages!

**Attendance Messages** Please text Annie or Erin as soon as you know if your child will not be attending. This way we can be sure to let families who need to add a day know that their child can take your place.



# GENERAL POLICIES



## Program Hours

Seasons offers the following schedules. Upon enrollment, we will come to an agreement on a regular schedule that best meets your needs. The following hours are available:

**Santa Barbara: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. or 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday- Friday.**

**Santa Ynez: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday-Wednesday-Friday.**

\* Please refer to tuition tab on “about us” menu for more details \*

## Schedule Changes

If you desire to change your schedule during the year, please send an email or text to Annie or Erin. Within a day or two you will get a reply with approval or denial, depending on available space. If you receive a denial, you may request to be placed on a waitlist in the case that a space opens. Please make note that tuition could possibly change with schedule changes. *Unfortunately, verbal schedule change agreements can be unclear or forgotten.* Using text or email helps ensure clarity.

**Overtime** Sometimes, due to absences, we have extra space in our program. If you request to add an extra day or part of a day, we ask that you keep track of this time and add to the next month's tuition. Overtime rates are \$15 per hour.

**Late Pick-Up** *Because of our staff's schedules, it is very important that all parents arrive on time to pick up their children. All our staff have obligations beyond school hours.* In the event that you are late to pick up your child, you will be assessed a late fee. This fee is payable directly to the mentor present and due immediately. You have a five-minute grace period before your late fee will be charged. Late fees are: **\$5.00 per minute and can be paid by Venmo.** We ask for your understanding in the payment of late fees.

## Tuition Payment

**Tuition payments are due by the 25th day of every month prior to service.** If your tuition payment is not received by the 28th school day of the month prior to service, you will be assessed a \$75 late fee.

## Sick Days & Vacation

\* Please see our Covid Policy and “Should I keep him/her home today?” below \*

Because of the economic reality of running our program, we must enforce a strict policy regarding time missed due to illness and vacation. If there is a request for a make-up day and the space is available, we can honor time missed due to illness. We cannot offer refunds for time missed. In the event of an emergency, special arrangements may be made at the discretion of the Seasons staff.

## Trial Period

There is a two-week trial period upon enrollment. If during this time and for any reason you or we determine that the needs of the child and/or the program are not being met, continuation of care may be cancelled, and the remaining tuition refunded. Fees paid for services already provided will not be refunded.

## Cancellation of Enrollment

All enrollees are enrolled for the entire 12-month school year. If there is a special circumstance such as illness or unemployment that results in a desire to relinquish your child's space at Seasons Path, it is imperative that you speak with Erin or Annie at the earliest opportunity. It may be necessary for you to pay the remainder of the tuition due for

the school year. Seasons Path is often unable to replace a child mid-year because our year is planned, and our rhythm set. At Seasons sole discretion, replacements may be found by our staff on a case-by-case basis.

## Holidays & Tuition Payments

We acknowledge several holidays each year, as well as staff days. Seasons will be closed on these days. Please see the complete calendar on our website. Tuition will remain the same every month of the twelve-month program regardless of the number of days school is open. Please see our Covid policy for contingencies. **This includes December and April which are half-months. Please note there may be a 2%-4% cost of living increase in tuition each year. Location and price of living influence rates.**

**Monthly/Annual Rates '23- '24** \* refer to tuition tab for more detail \*

### Santa Barbara

5 Day ½ day \$1,136/ \$13,633 | ¾ day \$1,670/ \$20,045  
4 Day ½ day \$945/ \$11,338 | ¾ day \$1,424/ \$17,075  
3 Day ½ day \$754/ \$9,044 | ¾ day \$1,136/ \$13,633  
2 Day ½ day \$579/ \$6,951 | ¾ day \$855/ \$10,259

### Santa Ynez

2 Day ¾ day \$675/ \$8,100 | 4 Day ¾ day \$1300/ \$15,600  
3 Day ¾ day \$975/ \$11,700 | 5 Day ¾ day \$1625/ \$19,500

Insurance and Supplies fee \$450 for the school year. Optional schedules are available upon request and availability at a rate of \$15 per hour.

\*10% Discount for the year paid in full by September tuition due August 25th.

**There is a \$75 late fee for tuition paid after the 25th of the month!**  
**Please make checks payable to: Seasons**

## SHOULD I KEEP HIM/HER HOME TODAY?



To help stop the spread of illness, all children who have symptoms of illness need to be kept at home. It is often difficult, however, to determine if your child is truly sick or in need of rest while their immune system has time to do its “job.” We hope that the following guidelines will help you to determine whether to keep your child home.

### Typical Symptoms of Contagious Illness

These symptoms are not always contagious, but we do ask you to be careful if any are present.

- Fever
- Runny nose with cloudy, yellow or green mucus - or - excessive/constant running nose of any kind
- Coughing/sneezing
- Congestion
- Excessive crankiness/irritability
- Mysterious rashes
- Diarrhea

If your child has any of the above symptoms, he or she needs to be kept home for at least 24 hours for observation. If you think your child may be contagious, please be sure they stay home for a full 24 hours **after** the symptoms disappear.

Due to Covid, we must ask that parents are particularly vigilant and cautious. Please check your child's temperature before coming to school. If a family member has a fever, please keep your child home.



There are some situations where it is best that your child stays home when he or she may not be sick. The basic guideline for this is to keep your child home any time he or she has had serious emotional distress or is acting out. Often a day at home is needed after an extended vacation to give the child a chance to center before returning to Seasons.

It is crucial that one parent, or a friend/relative is available AT ALL TIMES to pick up your child in the event that he or she becomes ill at school. If you are going to be at a different phone number than usual, or if you will be unreachable that day, please be sure to leave us an alternate number or person to contact.

Parents are expected to pick up their child within 30 minutes of receiving a call that the staff have determined that your child needs to go home sick. Not adhering to this policy not only results in the other children at school not having adequate staff to run the programs and activities that are scheduled for that day, but can also result in a termination of care if it becomes an issue.

**Additionally, when children are vaccinated, Seasons policy is that the children stay home and are monitored for 48 hours to go through any common adverse effects.** Some symptoms can include fever, nausea, discomfort, and fatigue which leave a child needing extra family love. We recommend scheduling vaccinations on a Friday afternoon so that your child can get the comfort and support that they may need over the weekend without having to miss any school.

## Covid policy effective until further notice:

During these times of uncertainty, we will experience heightened concern about protecting ourselves and those we love and want to protect the most- our children. Several articles have been released which illustrate the way in which outdoor programs naturally allow for the best possible educational experience in a group setting without compromising safety. Abundant space, fresh air and sunshine, small class sizes, and limited materials— all hallmarks of a forest school environment— minimize the risks of transmission and exist without any modification to a typical day.

(Read [here](#) and [here](#) for some input on the idea.)

Here are some other ways we will be responding to the pandemic:

- Teacher Responsibilities
  - Teachers will take their temperature daily before beginning care.
  - Teachers will be mindful in planning outdoor activities with a focus on those which naturally lend themselves to healthy environments.

- Children will be sent home without exception if they exhibit any of the following: persistent cough, fatigue, or fever.
- Parent Responsibilities
  - Parents will agree to our sick policy as outlined in our parent handbook. Families will be asked to report if anyone in their household has tested positive for Covid in the last 24 hours and to keep their child home, if so. Fever policy is always in place for children actively in our care.
  - Parents are asked to share what symptoms and emotional, mental, or physical stresses that their child has been experiencing.
- School Responsibilities
  - Groups will be limited to 10 or less children.
  - Hand washing will be increased and practiced before all activities involving shared materials.
  - Our travel potty will be sanitized between uses.
  - Our community snack program had been reinstated as of June of 2023. Families will need to provide a serving for each child, a plate and eating utensil and personal water bottle daily. We will be washing our hands before every snack time. \* Refer below in Food section and our Nutrition tab under “about us” menu \*
- Additional Info
  - The majority of learning children are doing in their early year’s centers around socio-emotional development with most of that learning occurring through nonverbal communication. While we understand the extra level of safety that comes from wearing masks, we believe the important learning that comes from visualizing the faces and expressions of teachers and peers outweighs the safety benefits of masks. Therefore, we will not ever require children or staff to wear masks. If someone chooses to do so, that will be respected.
  - While we will create many invitations for connection and play as we are out in our community, we will not admonish children for holding hands, touching, comforting one another, or playing in close contact. Children are coming through a time of isolation and stress and physical touch is essential for their comfort and well-being.
  - Children will be physically comforted by staff when appropriate.
  - In the event that Californians are asked to shelter-in-place during a scheduled session, tuition will be applied to the next re-opening date.  
We will continue to monitor information released by the government and the state of California and adapt our protocols as necessary. Our goal as always, is a safe community.



## DAILY RHYTHMS



Our day is full of games, art, learning and fun! Children are given the time to choose, to create, to imagine, to rest, to focus and to be free. We enjoy many activities during the day, most of which are messy, so we ask that children come to Seasons in washable, changeable clothing. Our rhythms are guided by observing the children and we keep to these rhythms by observing the clock. We ask that you help us by respecting our schedule and arriving on time for drop off and pick up. This will help us to keep our sweet rhythm uninterrupted. Please let the staff know no later than 7:15am if your child will not be attending Seasons, as we need to prepare for the correct number of car seats and boosters each day.

### Morning Drop Off

Timeliness is extremely important to our morning schedule. We request that the children arrive no later than 9:30am, as we will be leaving on our daily adventure as quickly as possible. If you are running late, please contact the staff so that you can plan to meet us later in the day.

Parent volunteer staff will be welcome in the rhythm of our day as the Covid situation eases. It's wonderful to let your child share their community and their experiences with you and it's nice for you to be able to get a peek into their day. Please be aware that your child may have more feelings to express during a parent volunteer staff day and that the process we work through is valuable to the family as a whole.



## FOOD



We are returning to our community snack program! All families contribute an item each day of school. Please provide enough to last the day, we are moving our bodies and working hard! This can be as simple as apples and peanut butter, or carrots and hummus... or as fancy as you would like to contribute.

Please be mindful of the food ingredient requirements, as well as food allergies we might need to manage. As of now, Santa Barbara is seafood free. Things may evolve or change as new children join us.

Community snack is a wonderful opportunity for the children to contribute to their friends “pot-luck” style,” and to explore new foods made in ways they may not have experienced yet. For instance, even as an adult, I was sure that I didn’t like Brussel sprouts until one of our families brought a lovely roasted dish of them to school! It’s simple and time saving for parents as well to make a bit extra for dinner the night before and bring leftovers to school to share rather than packing the individual lunch each day. The best part about tgat is the children get to experience foods from everyone’s table!

Please also provide a plate, appropriate cutlery, and a water bottle each day.

### Ingredient Requirements

- **No Added Sugar** (look for fruit juice sweetened items)
- **No Artificial Colors, Sweeteners, Flavors**
- **Organic Whenever Possible**

- Non-GMO

{ SANTA BARBARA ONLY: NO FISH or SEAFOOD }

It is helpful to carefully read labels. If you do bring in items that are determined to be not what we prefer to use (i.e., contains sugar, corn syrup, etc.), we will just ask you to return it for another item. Thank you for your careful lunch selection. We have some favorite snack recipes at [www.TheSessionsPath.org](http://www.TheSessionsPath.org)

### Share Snack Ideas

<u>Bread / Crackers</u>	<u>Fruit / Veggies</u>	<u>Protein</u>
Muffins	Anything In Season	Lentils
Corn Tortillas	Fruit Sauces	Cheese
Pasta	Artichokes	Beans
Rice Treats	Peas In the Pod	Tofu
	Corn On the Cob	Nut Butters

We also encourage reusable containers such as stainless steel, metal, and glass when metal is not available rather than plastic bags. This helps us keep our trash down and helps reduce the amount of packaging that gets purchased. And, as always, label your containers, please!

### **Family Potlucks**

We have potlucks two-four times during the year. Potlucks are short and sweet, from 12:00- 1:00pm. Please see the calendar for our schedule.



## Clothing



**Weather** We need to be mindful of freedom of movement while also enjoying warmth in our outdoor classroom. For this purpose, please provide your child with layered clothing. We can then add or subtract as weather permits. Please bring a wet bag for messy clothes so that the rest of the things in the pack stay (relatively) clean.

**Rainy Days** Snowsuits are the Best rainy-day clothes! These are essential as we will undoubtedly be getting wet! Please be sure that on rainy days your child has rainproof shoes and a snowsuit as well as a change of clothes as we spend most of our time outdoors. Our rainy-day policy is as follows: **We play in the rain.** Rainy days require lots of towels and extra clothes.

**-REMINDER-** Always dress your child in layers for the weather.

### **Diapers**

While we encourage cloth diapers, paper diapers are perfectly acceptable. If you do use cloth, please bring in extra pins or wraps (whatever accessories are needed) as well as a wet bag for dirty diapers.

Please make sure that your child always has diapers and wipes available in their pack.



## Parent/Community Education

### Seasons Certification

Seasons Path trains and certifies teachers and parents in the Seasons Philosophy. Our program runs August through July every year. Training includes curriculum, practical application, observations and critiquing, private support, and career support upon completion. Some teachers want to get certified to take this philosophy into preschool centers, others are looking to open their own programs using the Seasons Philosophy and some are parents who want to have a deeper education in how to raise healthy children. Whatever the reason, we are grateful for our ability to offer this resource to the public.

### **Non-Violent, Non-Commercial Environment**

Our unique Seasons Path environment of non-violent serenity and unhindered imagination is easily influenced by outside forces. Some of the things that can negatively affect our program is television and it's marketing, cell phone games and apps, tablets with games and apps, laptops, etc. It is hard to miss all the children's items that are advertisements for certain apps, programs, or movies – they are everywhere! We see them on lunch boxes, clothing, shoes, purses, backpacks, books, and toys. To keep our school media free, we ask that we minimize bringing these items to school with the children to the best of your ability. Please select noncommercial related clothing, diapers, and accessories for your child to wear and bring to school. In the case that your child does arrive at school with any commercial articles, we will simply remove them or turn them inside out for the duration of the program day. We also have many articles of clothing that have been passed down to Seasons that we can try to provide you will a full “Seasons uniform” for the week in your child's size. Additionally, we do not allow the use of violent toys or games. We strongly believe that guns specifically are weapons of destruction, are primarily used to kill, and are not appropriate playthings. Safety is our number one priority. The use of weapons at Seasons is not aligned with our goals. So, we encourage you to monitor and limit the use of violent toys at your home as an extension of your child's Seasons Path experience.



# EMERGENCY INFORMATION

## Emergencies

In case of an emergency, you may need to reach us during the day. Due to the nature of our busy day, we usually don't answer the phone. The best way to reach us is by text. However, we will make every effort to get to it if you call back repeatedly. As soon as the phone transfers to voicemail, hang right up, and call us back. That will signal us that there is an emergency. *Please refrain from using this signal unless there is a true emergency.* Evacuation and survival in the event of a major disaster will be made possible with your help. The children's **EMERGENCY PREPPED BACKPACKS** will be very important. Please be sure to include the Information Sheet in the diaper bag at all times (a Ziploc bag works well).

## Emergency Prepared Backpack

In the event of an emergency, Seasons has all the supplies needed for food, shelter and first aid. What we don't provide is personal safety items for the children, such as a note from Mommy or Daddy to explain that she or he will be there as soon as possible or to relay a special story, or specific emergency information that would be needed during a disaster. Therefore, it is required that every child's backpack doubles as a special emergency pack, child sized and fully equipped. *Children without packs will not be allowed to attend Seasons. All items must be in plastic bags that zip closed (i.e., Ziplock Bag or wet bag).*

### Emergency Backpacks Must Include:

Complete change of clothing, warm and cool weather provided for. **ESPECIALLY SHOES, SOCKS (AND UNDERWEAR IF POTTY TRAINED)**

- A picture of your family (parents/siblings)
- A letter, to be read to your child
- Emergency Evacuation Information Sheet
- Three granola or protein bars
- Water bottle
- Optional comfort item, such as a small stuffed toy or book

Please pack all items and practice with your child to determine if it is too heavy. **Your child may need to carry their pack for several blocks, as the staff will be carrying our other supplies and children needing assistance.** Please be sure to label everything clearly. Infant families- please pack your diaper bag with the intent to use this as your child's emergency pack. Store the Information Sheet in a Ziploc bag. You can download and print the Emergency Survival Pack Information (ESPI) form on the website under the "forms" tab.



## Seasons Calendar 2023-2024



Monday, August 14	First day of our new year!
Monday, September 4	Labor Day, Closed
Friday, September 22	Early dismissal, Potluck 12:00pm
Monday, October 9	Indigenous people day & Columbus Day, Closed
Tuesday-Friday, October 10-13	Parent/Director Meetings, early dismissal 12:00pm
Wednesday, November 1	Dia De Los Muertos day, Closed
Friday, November 10	Veterans Day, Closed
November 20-24	Thanksgiving Holiday Week, Closed
Friday, December 22	Early Dismissal, Potluck 12:00 p.m.
Monday-Sunday December 25-Jan 7	Winter Break, Closed
Monday, January 15	Martin Luther King Day, Closed
Friday-Monday, February 16-19	Presidents Weekend, Closed
{Santa Ynez Unified school district Mon-Fri 19-23}	{“February break,” Closed}
Monday-Friday, March 4-8	Parent/Director Meetings, early dismissal 12:00pm
Monday- Sunday March 25- April 7	Spring break closed
Friday, May 24	Early dismissal, Family Potluck 12 p.m.
Monday, May 27	Memorial Day, Closed
Wednesday, June 19	Juneteenth, closed
Monday-Friday July 1-5	Independence Day & Teacher wellness week, Closed
Friday, July 26	Last Day, early dismissal 12pm
Friday, July 26	Passage Ceremony TBA

**PARENT REMINDER:** ALL days that are marked “Closed” are **PAID** days.

