

Granola Kids Eco-Friendly Learning Center

Our Philosophy

Granola Kids is a certified eco-friendly early learning center that is dedicated to creating physical, emotional and social balance in the lives of young children. Granola Kids welcomes all children of all abilities in a developmentally appropriate environment. We believe that an environment free from harmful chemicals, toxins and pesticides will produce a healthier child, both physically and emotionally. Our mission statement is simple; a healthy and mindful environment equals a healthy and happy child. Learning is meant to be an exciting, enriching experience. At Granola Kids, we encourage children to learn through playing, exploring, and interacting with their teacher and fellow classmates. They are encouraged to be self-expressive and creative. We use dramatic play as a tool to assist them in understanding the world around them and as a platform for expressing their feelings and emotions. Children need to feel a sense of belonging and importance in the lives of the people that take care of them. Activities at Granola Kids reflect the interest of the children, their primary language and their background. At Granola Kids, we make LOVE a top priority. We want every child in our program to feel respected, encouraged, supported and most importantly loved. Our program encourages your child's growth and development with learning experiences that lay a foundation for physical, emotional and social skills.

Eco-Friendly Environment

Granola Kids supplies your child with a safe, healthy and eco-healthy environment

in which they are able to flourish. We are certified eco-healthy through the Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN) and listed as an eco-healthy child care facility on their website (www.cehn.org). We believe in eliminating chemicals, toxins and pesticides from the environment. Air quality significantly impacts children's health therefore Granola Kids has taken several steps to improve our facilities air quality. The home has been tested for harmful natural gasses to assure that we are within the appropriate levels allotted. Air ducts have been cleaned thoroughly to assist with reducing the amount of dirt, debris and allergens that lay hidden within the home. An EZ Breathe Ventilation System has been installed in the home in order to eliminate excess moisture, mold, toxins and allergies therefore resulting in a cleaner, healthier living environment. Soiled diapers and/or pull-ups are always placed in an Earth Friendly Diaper Sack, which is biodegradable and cuts down on airborne germs. Granola Kids is painted with Sherwin Williams low-VOC paint. Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) is a carbon based compound that evaporates readily and becomes airborne and can be extremely harmful to children. Granola Kids has taken the Pesticide-Free Yard pledge through the Sierra Club which not only protects the bees but limits the amount of chemicals and pesticides that children in my care are potentially exposed to.

At Granola Kids, we believe in trying to eliminate the high level of germs that often live in a preschool facility. We do this through daily cleaning of the classrooms and bathrooms but you can rest assured that at Granola Kids all the cleaning products used are biodegradable and non-toxic, making them safe for your children and the environment. Granola Kids recycles all paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum and plastic bottles, all the while teaching your child the importance of being eco-friendly. To help reduce the amount of paper and/or Styrofoam products used in a typical preschool facility, Granola Kids uses BPA

free plates, bowls, forks and spoons when serving snacks. All art supplies used are non-toxic and ACMI certified. We have researched the benefits of these resources and believe greatly in the positive effect they have on a child's health.

Aside from being eco-friendly, we have designed an environment that will support the developmental needs of children through exploration, creativity and self-expression. Our classrooms are equipped with an art center, home center, dress-up center, cozy corner and library. We believe that creative play supports not only a child's language development but their social development as well and therefore is greatly encouraged. Throughout the day the children are exposed to music, which plays quietly in the background. We believe that designing a calming environment will allow children to open up their minds and absorb the learning process. Although they are encouraged to explore their environment independently, we do believe in the benefits of interaction and therefore assign various group activities throughout the day.

Mind(ful), Body, Spirit Connection

At Granola Kids, we believe that a mind(ful), body connection benefits children by giving them the necessary tools needed to cope with many daily stressors that children often face. Krystal Ayari, owner of Granola Kids, has been trained in the techniques of TM (Transcendental Meditation) and understands not only the importance of a daily mindful practice but also the mental, emotional and physical benefits that are associated with meditation. Yoga enhances children's flexibility as well as improving their concentration and connecting them to their inner self. Daily yoga sessions are a part of the everyday experience at Granola Kids. Daily yoga sessions are offered through instruction taught by Krystal as well as through the award-winning children's series, I Can Do...Yoga and

Cosmic Kids Yoga. Instilling the importance of gratitude and the benefits of developing a daily gratitude practice is yet another example of our unique approach to child care.

Gratitude supports emotional wellbeing, elevates mood and feelings of greater happiness and a deeper connection to those around you. The more you express your gratitude for all you have, the more optimistic you become.

Organic Nutrition

We believe that the foods children put into their bodies help to fuel their minds. Proper nutrition is crucial for a child's well being and academic success. This is why all the food offered is completely organic. Organic food is grown without the use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms, or ionizing radiation. Animals that produce meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products do not take antibiotics or growth hormones (organic.org). We believe in the physical and emotional benefits children acquire from eating nutritious, organic food. We offer both a morning and afternoon snack that will be accompanied by organic milk or juice. Our snack menus will be displayed at the beginning of every week on the Parents Information Board. If your child has any food allergies, please be sure to include that information in your enrollment papers. All children are required to bring a healthy, nutritious lunch to school with them each day. Lunch is not offered through Granola Kids. Granola Kids will monitor meals provided from home and supplement as needed to ensure that children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals and snacks.

Health and Safety

The health of your child is extremely important to us and therefore we take great measures to ensure your child's wellness and safety. We believe that a child's overall

success begins with good health. We understand that children may have to attend child care even when they are feeling under the weather but please be respectful of the other children when making the decision whether or not to bring your child. Please refrain from sending your child to Granola Kids if they are suffering with an illness that prevents them from participating comfortably in activities, has a fever of 101°F or greater, is suffering from diarrhea and/or vomiting and any conditions with a specific diagnosis (Strep throat, head lice, Influenza, etc). If your child becomes ill while at Granola Kids, we will contact the parent or a family member and request the child be picked up as soon as possible. We request medical and up to date immunization records for all children attending Granola Kids. This information must be provided prior to the child's first day of care. We ask that your child's medical information be updated yearly and immunizations must be kept current. Frequent hand washing can help minimize the spread of germs so we ask that the first step children take upon arrival is to wash their hands. Once you drop your child off in the morning, please direct them to the bathroom where they will find all the necessary materials for proper hand washing.

The safety of your child is a top priority, so to ensure your child's safety we schedule monthly emergency evacuations. Each classroom is equipped with an emergency evacuation route and a list of proper protocol to follow in the case of an emergency.

Curriculum

Granola Kids will be using Mother Goose Time preschool curriculum, the professionally designed early learning program. Granola Kids uses Maryland Early Learning Standards to guide the lesson planning process. Mother Goose Time is a

nationally recognized curriculum that nurtures the whole child and supports their social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth. For more information about this exciting curriculum program, please view the Mother Goose Time website at www.mothersgoosetime.com.

Observation Policy

Granola Kids staff will observe children throughout the day, everyday, to monitor developmental progress. Staff will use a developmental checklist that will be shared with parents during yearly conferences.

Location/ Hours of Operation

Granola Kids is conveniently located in the South Four Corners neighborhood of Silver Spring. Our address is 10110 Brunett Avenue. We are 1.8 miles from the Forest Glen Metro Station as well as 2.2 miles from the Silver Spring Metro Station. Holy Cross hospital is less than a mile from Granola Kids and beltway accessibility is only a two minute drive away. We are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 5:30 pm.

Tuition

Tuition is payable in advance of services rendered and is therefore due on the first of the month. A late fee of twenty-five dollars will apply for all payments made following the day after payment is due. Repeated failure to pay tuition by the due date will result in the termination of services. If a check is returned, there will be a returned check fee of thirty-five dollars. Once a check is returned, payment must be made in the form of a money order, cashier's check or cash. Please note that the desired form of payment is through Venmo.

Deposit/Registration Fee

An initial deposit equal to two weeks of tuition is due at the time of registration. The two-week tuition deposit is applied towards the child's final two weeks at Granola Kids. A written four-week notice is required for any child leaving Granola Kids. If a parent removes their child without giving a four-week notice then their deposit will unfortunately not be refunded. A non-refundable registration fee of thirty-five dollars is due at the time of registration.

Holidays, Center Closures and Closures Due to Severe Weather

At Granola Kids, we strive to be open whenever possible during normal operating hours on a regularly scheduled day. We will be closed in recognition of various holidays throughout the year. Please view the Granola Kids Holiday Closing attachment. If the center must close due to severe weather, parents will be contacted as early as possible so alternative arrangements can be made. We will follow Montgomery County Public School closings for severe weather.

Absences, Sick Days and Vacations

In order to maintain your child's space at Granola Kids, tuition will be charged in full regardless of absences due to illness, vacation, holiday or inclement weather. When Granola Kids is closed for vacation (three weeks during the summer), parents are not required to pay tuition for two of the three vacation weeks. Tuition will be due in full for the month of August regardless of the one week vacation.

Personal Days

In order to maintain a healthy work life balance, Granola Kids will be closed for five days throughout the calendar year for personal days. This ensures that all staff can take the time needed to attend to personal affairs. Tuition will still be due in full regardless of closings related to personal days.

Policy on Public Health Emergency and/or Quarantine/Pandemic

As many of you know, the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent quarantine has forced many many business owners to review their current policies, reevaluate and implement new policies to better prepare for the future. During a national health emergency, we will do our best to keep Granola Kids open and operating as normal. However, if Granola Kids is no longer legally allowed to operate due to a public health emergency/quarantine, tuition will still be due in full regardless of the closures. If the Maryland State Department of Education makes the executive decision to close daycares as the result of an upswing in positive cases, tuition will be collected in full for four weeks following the closure. After the four-week period, if we are still closed as a result of a public health emergency/quarantine, tuition will be due at a 50% reduced rate until we are legally allowed to reopen and operate at full capacity.

Late Pick-up

Please note that an additional fee of fifteen dollars per every fifteen minutes you are late will be added to the following week's tuition.

Trial Period

A two-week trial period is used to determine that the fit between the parent, child

and Granola Kids is the best possible fit. During the two-week trial period, beginning on _____ and ending on _____, the provider and/or parent may terminate the contract with or without notice. After the trial period, a two-week written notice is required for termination of service.

Termination

At Granola Kids, our main concern is for the safety and welfare of the children. If a child or parent's behavior threatens the safety of the children or staff of Granola Kids, we will terminate service immediately. Granola Kids reserves the right to terminate service as deemed necessary or appropriate, with or without written notice.

Securing a Slot

If you are pleased with the Granola Kids facility and wish to secure a slot until your child is ready to attend, you may do so by paying the two-week deposit as well as the registration fee. In addition, the Granola Kids contract will need to be signed.

Discipline Policy

While at Granola Kids, children will be encouraged to make "good choices." Positive reinforcement is used everyday as a way of letting children know that they are making wonderful choices and to encourage them to continue their positive behavior. At Granola Kids, we take the time to frequently review the rules and exceptions of our center with each and every one of the children. Using redirection is our first step in discipline. We let the child know that the behavior they are demonstrating is not acceptable and then we give them an example of a better choice that he or she may make and we kindly encourage them to make a better choice. For Example, if a child wandered off during

circle time, I might say “Avery, would you please come back to circle time and bring me that book to read?” If a child is having continuous difficulty through-out the day making good choices, they will be asked to sit in “thinking time.” This will give the child a moment away from the excitement of the classroom and an opportunity to calm down and reflect on their behavior. A timer will be set depending on the age of the child (two-year-olds = two minutes, three-years-old = three minutes, etc.). Once the timer goes off, we will sit with the child and reflect on the behavior that leads to him or her needing to be placed in time out. We will then problem solve solutions to the issue at hand that could be tried in place of the negative choice that was made. We will always finish thinking time with a hug!

Screen Time Policy

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires all licensed child care in the state of Maryland to provide parents with a policy regarding the use of screen time. Please note that “passive technology” refers to any non-interactive television, videos and streaming media. At Granola Kids we ensure that children younger than the age of two may not be permitted to view any passive or interactive technology. Children two years of age and older may not be permitted to view more than one hour of age-appropriate, interactive technology per week. The technology offered will be solely for the benefit of educational purposes and will only be used to assist in furthering the learning process. Screen time will not be permitted during meals and/or snacks.

Parental Involvement

At Granola Kids, we believe parental involvement is crucial to the developmental success of the child. Granola Kids has an open door policy. We encourage you to join us in our daily activities. Feel free to drop in to eat snacks with your child, interact in one of our daily lesson plans or play for a few moments during outdoor play. We understand that working parents are faced with hectic schedules so if you need to discuss your child's progress but are unavailable to come into the center please contact Krystal by phone or email to schedule a conference call.

Family Conferences

At Granola Kids, we strive to ensure that all parents are given the opportunity to be active participants in their child's education therefore we will have twice year scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Parent-teacher conferences are a wonderful way for us to share the academic, social, emotional and physical growth and development of each child. An email will be sent out to all parents, one month prior to the parent-teacher conference week. We kindly ask that you respond with your top three choices for time slots. We will do our best to accommodate each parent's weekly schedule. Once all parents have been assigned a time slot, a reminder email will be sent out one week prior to your scheduled conference.

Inclusion Policy

At Granola Kids, we welcome all children to fully participate in our program, including children with special needs and special health care needs. We believe in helping every child reach his or her developmental goals. We review each child's needs on a

case-by-case basis to determine the best form of care. If your child has an IFSP or an IEP, we are more than willing to accommodate the various therapies that may be required. We ask that a meeting be scheduled between the parents, provider and co teacher, where we can review the IFSP/IEP together and discuss the treatment plan as well as the best time to schedule possible services while the child is at daycare. If your child has an IFSP or an IEP, we kindly request a copy that can be kept in your child's file. If you have questions or concerns regarding your child and their IFSP/IEP, please contact Krystal who is available to answer your questions and address any of your concerns.

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date

Granola Kids Signature/Date