



The Backyard School of Mesa Family Handbook

FOLLOWING THE CHILD'S VOICE, NURTURED BY NATURE.

The Backyard School LLC
7462 East Olla Avenue,
Mesa, Arizona
650-814-3523

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SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 LOCATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Director/Owner:** Ariel Jensen
- **Email:** AEW7056@gmail.com
- **Phone Number:** 650-814-3523
- **Facility Address:** 7462 E. Olla Ave., Mesa, Arizona, 85212
- **Website:** www.TheBackyardSchool.com

1.2 LICENSING, INSPECTION REPORTS, & INSURANCE INFORMATION

The Backyard School is regulated by the Bureau of Child Care Licensing (BCCL) within the Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS). Inspection reports are available for review on-site.

- Department street address: 150 North 18th Avenue, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85007
- Department telephone number: 602-364-2539

If you have a concern or complaint regarding a suspected licensing violation, you may contact the state's licensing agency.

The Backyard School carries the State-required liability insurance. Documentation of the liability insurance coverage is available on the school premises (address above).

1.3 OPERATING HOURS

The normal operating hours of The Backyard School are 9 am to 2 pm, Monday through Friday. We will follow the Gilbert Public Schools (GPS) academic calendar for the 10-month school year.

SECTION 2 - EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY & CURRICULUM

2.1 THE BACKYARD SCHOOL STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Following the child's voice, nurtured by nature.

The Backyard School is an early childhood learning program for children. We currently have capacity for children ages 3 to 5 years. Children are capable individuals in the process of learning social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Our environment is designed to empower and inspire independence, providing opportunities for exploration within a framework of clear, loving limits and continuous nurturing.

2.2 CURRICULUM

The Backyard School focuses not just on kindergarten readiness, but on sparking a lifelong love of learning by challenging and supporting the unique gifts of every child.

Inspiration from Reggio Emilia

The Backyard School is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach. We encourage children to learn, explore, and communicate through many different modes, including words, movement, art, and play. To support this diverse expression, we ensure our environment is rich with materials and opportunities for exploration.

Play-Based Curriculum

At The Backyard School, we embrace a play-based curriculum rooted in the belief that children are competent and capable learners. Learning happens through deep, supported, and sustained play.

Intentional Planning and Foundational Skills

Our play-based approach is intentionally structured to ensure comprehensive development:

- **Integrated Goals:** Our teachers develop weekly learning plans and activities that promote growth across the required developmental domains.*
- **Play as Instruction:** Foundational skills like literacy and numeracy are seamlessly woven into the play context.
- **Supportive Environment:** Teachers arrange flexible, open-ended spaces and provide ample, uninterrupted work time for rich activities such as art, sensory play, dramatic play, reading, music, and movement.

*Learning Objectives (*Arizona Early Learning Standards (AzELS), 4th Edition*)

1. **Social/Emotional Development:** Self-awareness, emotional skills, relationships, and social skills
2. **Approaches to Learning:** Initiative, curiosity, attentiveness, persistence, confidence, resilience, creativity, reasoning, and problem-solving
3. **Language and Literacy-** Listening, speaking, vocabulary, emergent reading (print concepts, phonological awareness), and emergent writing

4. Mathematics: Counting, cardinality, operations, algebraic thinking, measurement, data, and geometry
5. Science: Scientific inquiry, physical sciences, life sciences, and earth and space sciences
6. Social Studies: Understanding self, family, community, culture, economics, and basic civics
7. Physical Development, Health, & Safety: Gross motor skills, fine motor skills, health knowledge, and self-care skills
8. Creative Arts: Music, movement, visual arts, and dramatic play.

Teacher Guidance & Structure

We achieve balance through intentional teacher guidance that complements the child's independent play:

- Primary Focus: Play-based inquiry remains the core of our curriculum.
- Teacher-Led Support: This is supported by daily, intentional teacher-led times, including whole-class circle time for introducing concepts and small-group sessions designed to extend and deepen the children's emerging projects.

Literacy

Literacy is an essential part of learning at The Backyard School. We approach literacy as an organic and playful process. We intentionally embed books and written words into the environment to support children's interests, naturally building foundational skills like phonics and letter recognition in ways that are age-appropriate, meaningful, and engaging.

Emergent Curriculum

Curriculum at The Backyard School evolves based on the children's interests, a process known as emergent curriculum. Teachers carefully observe the children, then develop a flexible, collaborative plan to guide those interests into meaningful learning experiences.

Materials

Our materials are carefully chosen to be open-ended and supportive of deep exploration and creativity. We are committed to sustainability by seeking out natural and repurposed materials (such as rocks, sticks, wood, fabric, cardboard, etc.) whenever possible. We prioritize diverse and anti-bias resources to reflect and honor many different children and families.

Anti-Bias Curriculum

Our curriculum actively promotes anti-bias and anti-racism principles. We utilize diverse classroom materials and facilitate age-appropriate dialogue that helps children critically examine differing perspectives. This approach promotes critical thinking and encourages conversations around topics such as identity and fairness.

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

The Backyard School welcomes applications from students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and is committed to providing an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all children.

Private School Status Under Arizona Law

As a private school operating under Arizona law, The Backyard School is not subject to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements that govern public schools. Under A.R.S. § 15-765 and federal regulations at 34 C.F.R. § 300.137-300.144, private schools are not required to implement IEPs for parentally placed students.

Parentally Placed Students

When parents choose to enroll their child with an IEP at The Backyard School, this is considered a “parental placement” in a private setting. In such cases:

- The Backyard School is not legally required to implement the student's IEP
- The Backyard School is not required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as defined under IDEA
- Parents assume financial responsibility for their child's education, including any specialized services
- The student's home school district has no obligation to provide services at our private facility

Our Commitment to Inclusion

While we are not required to follow IEPs, The Backyard School is committed to working collaboratively with families to support each child's individual needs within our program structure:

- We will review IEP documentation to understand the child's strengths, challenges, and goals
- We will consider reasonable accommodations that align with our educational philosophy and program capabilities
- We encourage families to share strategies that work well for their child
- We will maintain open communication with families about their child's progress and participation

Enrollment Considerations

Enrollment decisions for students with IEPs are made on an individual, case-by-case basis. We will assess whether our program can appropriately meet the child's needs with reasonable accommodations. If a child's needs exceed our program's capabilities or require one-on-one support, modifications to curriculum, or specialized services that we cannot provide, we will work with the family to identify a more suitable educational placement. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's needs openly during the enrollment process to ensure The Backyard School is the right fit for their family.

2.3 OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

While The Backyard School is not strictly a “nature school,” our classroom is primarily situated outdoors to maximize the extensive benefits of the natural world. This environment supports every area of development (physical, cognitive, social, and emotional).

Philosophy of Play

Our open space naturally fosters gross motor development through running, jumping, and climbing. We intentionally incorporate supervised risky play, which allows children to test their physical limits in a controlled way. This practice is essential for building confidence, resilience, and life-long risk-assessment skills. Furthermore, time in nature is proven to improve attention spans and provide a natural calming effect.

Weather & the Elements

We believe there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing. Exploration often involves dirt, mud, and water. We ask that children arrive in play-ready clothes that are okay to get dirty. In the event of unmanageable weather (such as extreme heat or heavy storms), we will transition to our indoor classroom to ensure the comfort and safety of all students.

Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

To protect our students during extended outdoor time, we implement the following policy:

- Home Application: Please apply sunscreen and insect repellent to your child before arrival.
- On-Site Backup: If you would like us to reapply these products, you must provide your own labeled bottles for your child's cubby.
- Authorization: We cannot apply any topical products without a signed Sunscreen & Repellent Authorization form on file.

2.4 DAILY SCHEDULE SAMPLE*

A day at The Backyard School is rich with a balance of activities, ensuring personalized attention and collaborative learning. Our teachers integrate whole group, small group, and individual opportunities throughout the day. Activities include: extensive outdoor play, sensory exploration, circle and story time, free-choice center time, music, art, dramatic play, and engaging provocations.

Time is set aside for a fresh snack and lunch. Children are consistently encouraged to use the bathroom before and after activities and whenever needed. A copy of your child's weekly schedule will be posted in the classroom for your reference.

- **9:00 am to 9:30 am** - Drop-off. Outdoor Experiences. (Children arrive to create carefully curated stations & provocations.)
- **9:30 am** - Morning Gathering. (A short time for songs, storytelling/phonics, and discussing the day's project work.)
- **10:00 am** - Wash Hands. Snack Time (Provided by The Backyard School. A communal family-style snack focusing on conversation.)
- **10:30 am** - Wash Hands. Learning Centers/Provocations (The heart of our day. Children engage in long-term projects inspired by their own interests.)
- **12:00 pm** - Wash Hands. Family-Style Lunch Time. (Home-packed)
- **12:30 pm** - Wash Hands. Rest & Reflection (Quiet reading, soft music, journaling/drawing, puzzles)

- **1:30 pm to 2:00 pm** - Pick-up (Parents receive a brief daily update on the day's highlights.)

*Hours shown are for example only. Actual schedule hours may differ.

2.5 PREPARING FOR THE DAY

To ensure your child is ready for a day of outdoor discovery, please provide the following items daily. To prevent mix-ups, please label every item with your child's first and last name.

What to Wear

Because we spend our days in the backyard, children should be dressed for active, sometimes messy play. Layering is key. Arizona mornings can be chilly and afternoons quite warm. Dressing your child in layers allows them to adjust their temperature throughout the day.

Please monitor the forecast and dress your child accordingly:

- Sun: Sun hats and lightweight, breathable fabrics.
- Cold: Winter coats, beanies, and gloves for chilly mornings.
- Rain: Rain jackets and waterproof boots. (We love a good puddle jump!)
- Footwear: For safety during climbing and running, we recommend sturdy, closed-toe shoes.

Daily Essentials

- Nutritious Lunch: Please pack a daily lunch in a sturdy, labeled lunchbox.
- Water Bottle: A reusable, leak-proof water bottle is required.
- Backup Gear: Please keep two full changes of clothes (including underwear and socks) in your child's cubby.
- Sun & Bug Protection: Please apply sunscreen and bug spray to your child before they arrive at school.

Items from Home

A blanket or comfort item is always welcome for rest and reflection time. However, **we kindly ask that toys from home stay at home**. We provide a wide variety of open-ended materials designed for sharing. Having a different selection of toys at home versus at school helps keep children engaged in both environments.

2.6 FOOD & NUTRITION

Mealtime at The Backyard School is more than just refueling; it is a vital part of our students' social and emotional development. We focus on fostering independence, practicing healthy habits, and enjoying the company of friends. Children and teachers wash their hands thoroughly before and after every meal.

School-Provided Snack

Snacks are provided once in the mid-morning. We provide high-quality, vegetarian snacks daily. Our open snack policy allows children to decide for themselves if they are hungry, encouraging them to listen to their body's natural cues. Every snack includes at least two of the following components: whole grains, fruits, vegetables, or protein/dairy. Snack menus are posted in the classroom and sent monthly via email.

Lunch from Home

Each child brings lunch from home in an **insulated lunchbox**. As food will not be reheated, please select items accordingly or use a thermos to keep food warm. Please clearly label your child's lunchbox, thermos, containers, and water bottle with their first and last name.

We ask that you send foods that are healthy and safe for young children to eat, avoiding items high in refined or added sugar. While teachers sit with children to encourage them and model social graces, we do not force children to eat or insist that they eat certain foods before others. If you have concerns about your child's eating habits, please arrange to meet with your child's teachers.

To minimize waste and pests in our outdoor space, we follow a Pack-it-In, Pack-it-Out practice: all leftovers and wrappers will be placed back in your child's lunchbox to be disposed of at home. This also allows you to see exactly what your child chose to eat each day.

Hydration

Staying hydrated is essential for active, outdoor learning. Please send your child with a **reusable water bottle** every day. We provide fresh water for refills throughout the day. To promote healthy dental and nutritional habits, we do not serve juice at school.

Allergies & Dietary Restrictions

Parents must complete the Student Information Sheet in the enrollment packet. Allergy information is posted in the classroom to ensure all staff are informed. To protect children with allergies and respect family dietary choices, we do not permit children to share or trade food.

Weekly Snack Menu Example

- Monday: Whole-wheat crackers and Cheese cubes (Grain + Dairy)
- Tuesday: Sliced Apples and Almond butter (Fruit + Protein)
- Wednesday: Carrots and Hummus (Veggie + Protein)
- Thursday: Yogurt with Blueberries and Granola (Dairy + Fruit + Grain)
- Friday: Snap Peas, Whole-wheat Mini Muffins, Milk (Vegetable + Grain + Dairy)

SECTION 3 - COMMUNICATION & BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

3.1 COMMUNICATION & PARTNERSHIP

We believe that an open, responsive, and ongoing system of communication is essential to your child's success. We are committed to a partnership built on mutual respect and a shared goal: the well-being of your child.

Scheduled Exchanges & Feedback

To ensure we are aligned on your child's development and the program's goals, we provide the following formal touchpoints:

- **Guardian-Teacher Exchanges (2x Per Year):** These meetings allow staff and families to share insights, observations, and assessments. Additional conferences may be requested at any time.
- **All-Families Meetings (2x Per Year):** These group meetings are held to review program goals, plan upcoming events, and discuss shared concerns.
- **Annual Program Survey:** At the end of each year, families and staff complete a survey to identify strengths and areas for growth, helping us set goals for the following year.

Addressing Concerns

We encourage families to negotiate differences directly and early. If you have a concern, please address it with the classroom teacher or the Director. Discussions should take place in a private setting, away from children, and when staff are not responsible for supervision.

We maintain a strict policy of confidentiality for all matters concerning children. Differences between families are handled privately and without bringing individual families together. We require all communication to be conducted respectfully; abusive language toward staff will not be tolerated.

Parent Grievance Procedure

A grievance is an unresolved complaint regarding a policy or event. This procedure ensures a timely and fair resolution. (Note: "Days" refers to business days.)

- **Initial Discussion:** Parents should discuss the concern with the relevant staff member within 5 days of the event.
- **Director Review:** If the matter remains unresolved after 3 days, the parent should schedule a formal meeting with the Director to discuss the grievance.
- **Written Statement:** If a resolution is not reached during the meeting, the parent may submit a formal written statement of grievance to the Director.
- **Final Decision:** The Director will review the written statement, conduct any necessary internal investigation, and provide a final written decision to the parent within 5 days.

3.2 BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE & BOUNDARIES

At The Backyard School, we view limit-setting as an opportunity to guide children toward self-direction in an atmosphere of mutual respect. We understand that self-control is a developing skill that requires time, patience, and consistent adult modeling.

Our Approach

Our guidance practices are rooted in safety and respect. We focus on three primary boundaries: Safety for self, safety for others, and safety of property. To support children in meeting these expectations, we utilize:

- **Positive Direction:** We tell children what they can do, rather than just what they cannot. We speak at eye level and use a firm but calm tone.
- **Natural Consequences:** Limits are followed by related actions. For example, if a rock is thrown, the child may be asked to leave the play area for a period of time before being invited to try again.
- **Conflict Resolution:** When social conflicts arise, teachers move quickly to ensure safety and then facilitate a problem-solving process that helps children build social skills.
- **Emotional Support:** We accept all children's feelings as legitimate while helping them learn appropriate ways to express those feelings.

Support & Supervision

We do not use time-outs or any form of demeaning language. However, if a child is overwhelmed and needs to be removed from the group to regain calm, they will do so under the close supervision of a teacher. No physical restraint is ever used unless it is necessary to protect a child from immediate injury.

We are committed to the success of every child. Rather than asking a child to leave our program due to challenging behavior, we work in partnership with families to find the necessary supports.

Safety & Legal Requirements

The Backyard School maintains a strict policy regarding the physical and emotional safety of our students:

- **Corporal Punishment:** At no time, and under no circumstances, is spanking, ridicule, or retribution permitted by staff or parents while at school.
- **Mandated Reporting:** As early childhood educators, we are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any incident in which a child is physically or emotionally harmed.
- **Confidentiality:** All matters concerning a child's behavior are handled with strict confidentiality.

Family Partnership

We recognize that your practices at home may differ from ours, but we respectfully ask that you follow these school guidelines while on campus. We are happy to offer suggestions or schedule meetings to discuss this sometimes-tricky subject as we work together to support your child's growth.

3.3 MANDATED REPORTING

At The Backyard School, we deeply value the trust you place in us and prioritize the safety of every child. Under state law, all staff members are Mandated Reporters. This means we are legally required to report any suspected child neglect or abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) immediately to a child protection agency. Our role is strictly to report observations as required by

the Penal Code, not to investigate; these reports are made non-judgmentally and with the utmost confidentiality.

Please be aware that child abuse law considers any discipline that results in physical injury, such as bruises from spanking, to be a reportable offense. While we respect diverse cultural backgrounds, we are bound by state legal standards. In most cases, we will notify families when a report has been made, unless otherwise directed by child protective services.

We recognize that parenting can be challenging and that the responsibility of mandated reporting is a serious matter. If you are feeling overwhelmed or need support with discipline or other parenting issues, we encourage you to speak with the Director. We are here to provide assistance, resources, and referrals to help your family thrive.

SECTION 4 – STAFF & TRANSPORTATION

4.1 STAFF & ASSESSMENT

The Backyard School is led by Early Childhood Education professionals who exceed Arizona licensing standards. We are committed to a culture of continuous learning to ensure our teaching practices remain developmentally appropriate and effective.

Progress Reports

Teachers complete written assessments twice per year. These portfolios of milestones, observations, and work samples are reviewed during guardian-teacher conferences to set collaborative goals for your child.

Developmental Support

Our teachers are experienced educators, but we are not developmental or special-needs experts; our staff will never diagnose developmental delays or differences. We will share our professional observations with you if we notice indicators of a potential delay.

Parents are responsible for contacting and coordinating with outside specialists for evaluations. Once an external plan is in place, we are happy to collaborate with these agencies to support your child's individual needs within our school environment.

All assessments and screenings are strictly confidential. Parents may request access to their child's administrative file at any time.

Low Ratios

We maintain a maximum ratio of one educator to five children (1:5), with a total class size limited to 10 students.

4.2 TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

The Backyard School does not provide transportation to or from the program.

Staff members are strictly prohibited from transporting children off school property at any time. To ensure student safety and professional liability standards, please do not ask employees to transport your child via personal vehicle.

SECTION 5 – ENROLLMENT, BILLING, & POLICIES

5.1 ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Once you have received confirmation of your child's acceptance, please secure their enrollment by submitting the following items to the office:

Required Forms

Please ensure all documents below are filled out completely:

- Student Application
- Enrollment Agreement
- Handbook Acknowledgement & Agreement
- Student Information Sheet
- Photo, Video, & Documentation Release
- Emergency Information & Medical Release
- Release Authorization Forms
- Immunization Record Consent
- Sunscreen & Insect Repellent Authorization
- IEP Acknowledgment (*if applicable*)

Required Payments

- Non-refundable Registration Fee
- First Tuition Payment

5.2 BILLING, TUITION & FEES

The Backyard School relies on timely tuition payments to maintain our low ratios, high-quality materials, and exceptional staff. Our tuition is structured as a consistent monthly investment in your child's early education.

Monthly Tuition Rates

Our standard program runs Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

- 5 Full Days: Monday – Friday (9 AM – 2 PM) 25 hours/week, \$850/month
- 5 Mornings: Monday – Friday (9 AM – 12 PM) 15 hours/week, \$535/month
- 3 Full Day: Monday, Wednesday, Friday (9 AM – 2 PM) 15 hours/week, \$535/month
- 2 Full Day: Tuesday, Thursday (9 AM – 2 PM) 10 hours/week, \$355/month

For the 2026-27 school year, the first day of school is Tuesday, July 28th. Because of this, we will collect a pro-rated tuition payment for the four days in July. This will be collected on July 1st or, if you are enrolling after July 1st, at the time of enrollment. Pro-rated July tuition is calculated by dividing the number of days your child will attend in July according to your chosen enrollment schedule by 20 (our standard number of operating days per month), then multiplying that fraction by your monthly tuition. For reference, full-time families will owe \$170 for July ($4/20 \times \850). Please see your specific Enrollment Agreement for more specifics. Regular tuition payments of \$850 will resume on August 1st. This July pro-ration is the only instance in which

tuition will be adjusted; monthly tuition for all other months is charged in full regardless of attendance.

Enrollment & Deposit

To secure your child's spot for the school year, the following fees are required at the time of enrollment:

- **Registration Fee:** A **non-refundable**, one-time fee of **\$200** to process and ensure enrollment.
- **Security Deposit:** We require a deposit equal to **one month of tuition (\$850)**. This deposit is held by the school and will be applied to your child's **last month of enrollment**, provided the required 30-day written notice of withdrawal is given.

Payment Schedule & Policies

Due Date: Tuition is due in full on the **1st of each month**.

Late Fees: Payments received after the 5th of the month will incur a late fee of \$25, with an additional \$5 per day added thereafter until the balance is cleared.

Suspension of Service: If tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month, services may be suspended or terminated to protect the school's operational stability.

Consistency: Our monthly tuition remains the same regardless of school holidays, scheduled breaks, child absences (due to illness or family vacation), or inclement weather closures. This consistency allows us to guarantee your child's spot in the class and maintain our commitment to our educators' salaries.

Investment in Quality

Our tuition rates reflect the high-quality educational experience and essential resources we provide for every child. These rates directly sustain the critical components that make The Backyard School a premier learning environment:

- **Expert Educators:** We invest in highly trained staff, providing them with dedicated time for the observation and documentation that drives our emergent curriculum.
- **Individualized Attention:** We maintain low child-to-teacher ratios to ensure every student receives personalized support and guidance.
- **Exceptional Learning Materials:** Our environment is curated with high-quality, open-ended materials and a fresh, healthy snack menu is prepared daily.
- **Safety & Standards:** Tuition supports the rigorous operational costs of maintaining a fully licensed and regulated program that meets all state safety and quality standards.

5.3 WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Should you need to withdraw your child, we require a minimum of 30 days' written notice. The 30-day notice period begins on the date written notice is received. Please note that tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance, and is not prorated.

Full Month Tuition Requirement

If your child's enrollment extends into any part of a calendar month, tuition for that entire month is due.

Example: A family providing notice on November 15th will have a final enrollment date of December 15th and will be responsible for the full tuition payment for both November and December.

Security Deposit Application

If you have already paid tuition for the month in which you provide notice, your security deposit will be applied to cover tuition for the portion of the notice period that extends into the following month. No refund will be provided for tuition already paid in the month notice is given. If you have already paid tuition for the month in which you provide notice, your security deposit will be applied to cover tuition for the portion of the notice period that extends into the following month. No refund will be provided for tuition already paid in the month notice is given. Any remaining balance of the security deposit after applying it to the final prorated period will be refunded within 10 business days of the child's last day.

Example: If notice is given on January 15th and you have already paid January tuition on January 1st, your child's last day would be February 14th. The January tuition payment (already paid) covers January 15th-31st, and the security deposit covers February 1st-14th.

5.4 TERMINATION POLICY

At The Backyard School, we view our relationship with families as a partnership built on trust, safety, and open communication. Our primary goal is to resolve conflicts collaboratively and to provide an environment where every child is supported. However, we understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise where our program is no longer the right fit, or where the professional agreement between the school and the family can no longer be sustained.

Process and Notice

Before any termination of enrollment occurs, families will receive written notice. Each situation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness and appropriate handling. Prior to making any decision to end enrollment, we ensure that multiple meetings have been held with the family to address concerns and explore solutions, all discussions and interventions have been thoroughly documented, and the family has been given adequate opportunity to remedy the situation. Refunds for the security deposit or any prepaid tuition will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the specific circumstances and timing of the enrollment termination. Details regarding any applicable refund will be provided in the written notice.

Partnership & Professional Boundaries

We are committed to working closely with you to ensure your child's success. In rare instances, The Backyard School may find it necessary to terminate services to protect the integrity of our program or the safety of our community. This decision is typically a last resort and may occur due to:

- Persistent Non-payment: Timely tuition is essential to sustaining our high-quality environment.

- **Professional Boundaries:** A significant breakdown in the partnership between the school and the family or conduct that is disrespectful toward our staff or community values.
- **Safety Concerns:** Situations where a child's actions consistently compromise the safety of themselves, other children, or the environment, despite our collaborative efforts to find a resolution.

Transitioning from the Program

If you decide that your family no longer requires our services, we ask for your partnership in ensuring a smooth transition:

- **30-Day Notice:** Please provide the director with written notice at least 30 days prior to your child's final day. This allows us to celebrate your child's time with us and properly manage our classroom enrollment.
- **Financial Commitment:** If 30 days' notice is not provided, tuition for that 30-day period remains due in full. As our school operates on fixed costs to maintain our ratios, all tuition and fees are non-refundable.

Final Resolution

We always prefer to handle financial matters directly and respectfully with our families. However, should an account remain unpaid for thirty (30) days without a prior agreed-upon arrangement, the school reserves the right to pursue professional collection services.

SECTION 6 – ACCESS & PICK-UP POLICIES

6.1 PARENT/GUARDIAN ACCESS

Except during a healthcare emergency, primary guardians are welcome to visit their child in the center at any time during operating hours.

To protect child safety, The Backyard School uses a Multi-Factor Identifier System. Upon enrollment, parents provide specific identifiers, such as authorized pick-up names and healthcare providers. If a caller requests sensitive information from an unrecognized number, staff will ask for a combination of these identifiers. If the caller cannot verify their identity, staff will end the call and immediately dial the parent's primary number on file.

6.2 DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Sign In & Sign Out

Per state licensing requirements, a parent or authorized representative must sign your child in and out every day using a full signature and the time of arrival/departure.

Authorized Pick-Up

Children will only be released to individuals who are 18 years or older and are formally designated on the school's Release Authorization forms. You may update your authorized pick-up list and emergency contact information at any time. It is the guardians' responsibility to notify the administration immediately of any changes.

Release Authorizations

To ensure your child's safety, only parents, legal guardians, or designated authorized adults (age 18+) may pick up your child. If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child, you must notify the teacher using a formal Release Authorization form.

Any person unfamiliar to the teacher will be required to show picture identification before the child is released.

Safety Policy

For safety, staff will not release a child to any adult who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or who does not have the appropriate equipment (like a car seat) for safe transport.

6.3 LATE PICK-UP

We kindly ask that you be prompt when picking up your child at the scheduled closing time. Our staff remains at the school until every child is safely picked up, and we want to respect their time and schedules. If you anticipate being late (e.g., due to traffic or an unexpected delay), please call the school immediately to notify our teachers.

Procedure for Late Pick-Up

If your child remains at our facility past our closing time, we will take the following steps to ensure their safety and well-being:

- Contact Parents: Management will immediately attempt to contact you (parents/guardians) using all available communication methods.
- Contact Emergency Contacts: If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the individuals listed on your child's emergency contact list to arrange for prompt pick-up.
- Staff Wait Time: Staff will wait with your child during the arranged pick-up time confirmed with the authorized contact person.
- Police Notification: Should the pick-up time exceed one hour past closing, or significantly exceed the time confirmed by the emergency contact (whether contact was successful or not), staff will notify the non-emergency police line for assistance.

We reserve the right to disenroll a family if continued late pick-ups become routine or excessive. Repeated failure to adhere to our pick-up time may result in the termination of childcare services for your child.

SECTION 7 – HEALTH, SAFETY, & EMERGENCIES

7.1 IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Per Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) licensing requirements and A.R.S. § 36-883, all children enrolled at The Backyard School must have current immunization records on file using the ADHS Emergency, Information and Immunization Record Card. Required immunizations must be documented before your child's first day of attendance and kept current throughout enrollment. Parents must provide updated immunization records as additional vaccines are administered according to the recommended schedule.

- **EXEMPTION:** Arizona law allows exemptions for medical or personal beliefs. If claiming an exemption, parents must complete the appropriate ADHS exemption form and submit it to the school for the child's file.

7.2 ILLNESS EXCLUSION POLICY

To protect the health of all children and staff, we follow ADHS licensing standards for illness exclusion. Children must be kept home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100°F or higher (must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning)
- Vomiting or diarrhea (must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning)
- Contagious illness (e.g., pink eye, strep throat, lice, hand-foot-mouth disease)
- Unexplained rash
- Difficulty breathing or persistent cough
- Any condition that prevents the child from participating comfortably in regular activities

If your child becomes ill during the school day, we will contact you immediately for pick-up. Your child must be picked up within one hour of notification. Children may return to school once they have been symptom-free (without medication) for 24 hours, or with a doctor's note clearing them to return.

7.3 MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

General Medication Rule

We are a non-medication facility. We do not accept or administer antibiotics, cough syrups, or fever reducers.

Emergency Medications

For children with known allergies or medical conditions requiring emergency medication (e.g., EpiPen, inhaler), parents must provide written authorization, the medication, and a care plan from the child's physician. Only staff trained in Arizona licensing standards may administer EpiPens or inhalers.

Documentation

Staff will maintain a written log of all medications administered, including date, time, dosage, and staff signature. Parents will receive a copy of this log.

Requirements for Medication Administration

- Written authorization from the parent/guardian using the school's Medication Authorization form
- Medication must be in its original container with the child's name, dosage instructions, and current date
- Prescription medications must include the prescribing physician's name and pharmacy label
- All medications must be handed directly to a staff member (not left in child's belongings)

7.4 ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety of our students is our highest priority. All staff members at The Backyard School are certified in First Aid and CPR, and a comprehensive emergency kit remains with the group at all times.

Immediate Care

In the event of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and provide continuous care until paramedics arrive. For minor injuries, staff will administer basic first aid and comfort. We will notify parents or emergency contacts immediately following any significant accident or emergency.

Incident Reporting

A written Incident Report will be provided to the family for any injury beyond a minor scrape. A copy will also be kept in your child's permanent confidential file per ADHS licensing requirements.

Emergency Contact Information

Please ensure your emergency contact information is always up to date in our records. You are responsible for notifying the school immediately of any changes to contact numbers, authorized pick-up persons, or medical information.

Pesticide Notification

Per Arizona licensing requirements (A.A.C. R9-5-403), guardians will be notified at least 48 hours before a pesticide is applied on the facility's premises.

SECTION 8 – DAILY CARE ROUTINES

8.1 TOILET LEARNING & BODY AUTONOMY

To ensure your child can fully participate in our outdoor activities, we ask that children be fully toilet trained before their first day. We understand that accidents are a natural part of growth for ages 3–5; we are supportive and will work closely with your child to reinforce the habits you have established at home. Teachers perform regular check-ins and encourage children to use the restroom at logical transitions throughout the day.

Please provide **two full changes of clothes (including socks and extra shoes)** in your child’s cubby. If an accident occurs, we will assist your child in changing into dry clothes with dignity and care. To maintain our health standards, soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed bag and sent home for laundering.

A Note on Body Language

We believe that providing children with accurate and positive information about their bodies contributes to a healthy body image and promotes personal safety. To avoid confusion and promote ownership of their own bodies, staff use straightforward, anatomical language (such as penis, vagina, and vulva) at appropriate times. We aim to foster an environment where children feel confident and informed about their physical selves.

8.2 REST & REFLECTION

We do not have a scheduled, classroom-wide naptime. Instead, we transition after lunch into a period of Rest and Reflection. While we always provide comfortable cots for children who truly need sleep or a physical break, our focus is on providing a peaceful window for children to recharge their minds and bodies.

This time is a vital part of our curriculum. By engaging in quiet reading, journaling, drawing, or puzzles, children learn to be comfortable with their own thoughts and process their morning’s discoveries. These quiet-work habits foster self-regulation and emotional independence. We provide a calm environment with soft music to help children slow down. We encourage children to listen to their body’s cues—whether that means deep focus on a puzzle or a short nap.

Families may provide a **small blanket or a stuffed animal** to help their child feel cozy. Please label these items clearly and take them home every Friday for laundering. To maintain a healthy environment, all cots are sanitized regularly, and school-provided sheets are laundered weekly.

SECTION 9 – COMMUNITY & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

9.1 COMMUNITY & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

We believe that a child’s education is most successful when it is a shared journey between the school and the home. **We celebrate and welcome all children, all families, and all backgrounds.** We are committed to fostering an environment of belonging where every family’s unique culture and identity are respected and valued.

Strengthening Identity and Culture

To build a rich, inclusive community, we invite children and families to share information about their lives, traditions, and communities. By integrating these personal stories into our program, we strengthen each child’s sense of identity and broaden the horizons of our entire class.

Communication & Documentation

We maintain an open window into your child’s day through intentional, transparent communication. You will receive newsletters and regular updates throughout the month. We also feature Documentation Boards around the classroom that showcase current projects, children’s interests, and the curriculum in action. We love sharing the joy of our days through occasional photographs and updates.

Please note that any significant injuries or incidents will always be communicated promptly and directly.

Progress Reports

Formal guardian-teacher conferences are held twice yearly. These are opportunities to review documentation and assessments to set collaborative goals for your child.

Family Engagement & Volunteering

We value your presence and unique talents! We encourage family involvement through:

- **Participation:** We welcome family members to join us for field trips or to visit for a portion of the day to share a story or a special skill.
- **Community Gatherings:** Our calendar includes all-family meetings and social exchanges to help us grow closer as a community.
- **Volunteering:** If you are interested in volunteering regularly, please speak with the Director. To ensure the safety of our students, all regular volunteers must complete necessary paperwork, including a background check and fingerprint clearance.

9.2 FIELD TRIPS & COMMUNITY EXPLORATIONS

We believe our community is an extension of our classroom. We frequently venture off-site to allow children to explore and learn within their local environment.

We often visit locations within walking distance, such as The Desert Place/Morrison Ranch Park, the canal on Power & Guadalupe, or the Mesa Express Library and Monterey Park. For these excursions, children will walk or be transported in our school wagons.

Occasionally, we hold the entire school day at a nearby site like the Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch. For these days, parents are responsible for dropping off and picking up their child directly at the location, as **The Backyard School never transports children in vehicles.**

Choice & Consent

Your child's safety and your peace of mind are our priorities. **We will never take a child off school property without explicit, written parental permission.** Field trips are always optional. If you do not wish for your child to participate in an off-site excursion, you may choose to keep them home for that day.

We love suggestions! If there is a local spot you think the children would enjoy, please share it with the Director. Guardians are always welcome to join us on any of our adventures.

9.3 HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS & TRADITIONS

At The Backyard School, respecting family diversity is a cornerstone of our program. We believe that learning about holidays can strengthen a child's cultural identity and broaden their awareness of our diverse world. We strive to create a space where every family feels valued and no one feels excluded.

Our Educational Approach

We treat holidays as opportunities for learning, not as a religious or belief-based curriculum. We focus on the history of special days, making clear the diversity of beliefs surrounding them. We especially prioritize teaching about celebrations that honor struggles for freedom, self-determination, and justice.

We recognize that commercialized versions of holidays are not culturally neutral. To ensure all families feel respected, we never impose the traditions of one group on the entire class, nor do we assume that every family celebrates holidays.

We focus on the things that bring us together, such as family gatherings, the changing seasons, and community milestones. We invite you to share your family's unique traditions with us so we can learn together. We will never impose holiday beliefs or participation on a family. If your family does not celebrate specific holidays, or any holidays at all, we respect your right to that tradition and will ensure your child feels fully included in the daily rhythm of school life.

Birthdays & Invitations

To protect the social and emotional well-being of all our students, we have a simple policy regarding outside celebrations: **If you are hosting a birthday party or private event, invitations may only be distributed at school if every child in the class is invited.** This policy prevents children from feeling excluded and helps maintain the inclusive environment we work so hard to build.

An Ongoing Dialogue

There is no one right way to handle the complexities of holidays in a diverse community. We remain open to discussion and feedback from our families. Above all, mutual respect is our guiding principle.

9.4 SCREEN-FREE POLICY

Our classroom is screen-free. This means our curriculum does not include the use of televisions, tablets, gaming devices, or computers. This policy aligns with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, emphasizing active play over digital media for children under five. We prioritize real-world discovery and human connection over digital media to fuel deep engagement and learning.

Adult Use of Technology in the Classroom

Our focus is entirely on the children, so adult technology use is minimal and purposeful. Teachers primarily use devices for documentation (recording observations, taking photos of projects, and communicating learning moments to families).

Children may occasionally use a device (like a camera) as one of the many languages of expression, always under the intentional guidance of an adult.

We work hard to maintain a trusting, secure environment for all our families. We kindly ask all parents and visitors to refrain from taking pictures of other people's children in the classroom or common areas. We will share photos of your child engaging in learning activities with you privately so you can see their wonderful work!

Photo & Video Release

Children's photographs and videos are sometimes used by The Backyard School for marketing materials, educational resources, and/or class projects. A waiver is included in the registration packet. By signing, you grant The Backyard School the right to use photos and video recordings of your child(ren) for our school's purposes. This media may be shared without any compensation.

If you do not wish for your child's image to be used for general school promotion, you must indicate so on the Photo, Video, and Documentation Release form. If you opt out, your child's photos, pictures, or videos will only be authorized for in-classroom communication (e.g., shared via a secure platform) and will be accessible only by other enrolled parents in your child's specific class.

To protect the privacy of all students, parents must strictly refrain from posting any photos, images, or videos of other students (children who are not your own) from The Backyard School on social media or public platforms.

Failure to follow this privacy policy will be considered a material breach of the school's enrollment agreement and may result in the termination of service and disenrollment.

9.5 SUPPORTING THE BACKYARD SCHOOL

The Backyard School is a local, woman-founded start-up born from a deep love for our community. As we grow, we welcome and appreciate the support of our families.

Donations: If you would like to contribute materials, books, or loose parts (natural building materials, etc.), please contact the Director.

Community Engagement: Your involvement—whether sharing a skill, volunteering, or spreading the word—is the foundation of our success.

SECTION 10 – LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

10.1 CUSTODY AND COURT ORDERS

The Backyard School requires all families to provide accurate information regarding custody arrangements and parental rights at the time of enrollment.

Legal Documentation Required

If there are any custody restrictions, restraining orders, or court orders affecting a parent's access to the child, you must provide the school with a certified copy of the current court order. This document will be kept in your child's confidential file.

Release of Children

In the absence of a court order on file with the school, both parents/legal guardians have equal rights to access their child and their child's records, regardless of custodial arrangements. Staff cannot deny a legal parent access to their child without proper legal documentation.

Updates to Court Orders

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent/guardian to immediately notify the school of any changes to custody arrangements or court orders and to provide updated legal documentation.

10.2 CONFIDENTIALITY & RECORDS

Per Arizona licensing requirements (A.A.C. R9-5-404), The Backyard School maintains confidential records for each enrolled child.

Information Maintained

Child records include enrollment forms, emergency contacts, immunization records, medical information, authorized pick-up lists, incident reports, and any other documentation related to the child's care and safety.

Access to Records

Parents and legal guardians have the right to access their child's records at any time during regular business hours. Requests to review records should be made to the school administrator.

Confidentiality

All student and family information is kept strictly confidential and will not be released to third parties without written parental consent, except as required by law or court order, or to licensing and regulatory agencies during inspections.

Record Retention

Records are maintained in accordance with ADHS Bureau of Child Care licensing requirements under Arizona Administrative Code Title 9, Chapter 5. Records relating to enrollment, attendance, health and immunization, incident and accident reports, and financial and billing information are retained for a minimum of twelve (12) months following disenrollment or creating, as applicable, unless a longer period is required by law. All records are stored securely on the School's premises and treated as confidential. Records will not be disclosed to third parties without prior written parental consent, except as required by law, including disclosures to ADHS during inspections or to the Arizona Department of Child Safety. Parents may review or request copies of their child's records during regular business hours. At the expiration of the applicable retention period, records are securely destroyed unless subject to a pending or reasonably anticipated legal matter.

10.3 NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Backyard School admits students and provides services without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

This policy applies to all programs, services, and activities, including but not limited to admissions, enrollment, educational programs, and employment practices.

We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all children and families.

SECTION 11 – CALENDAR & CLOSURES

11.1 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The Backyard School will follow the Gilbert Public Schools (GPS) academic calendar for the 10-month school year.

11.2 INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCY CLOSURES

The Backyard School prioritizes the safety of our students and staff. We may close or modify operations due to weather conditions or other emergencies.

Weather-Related Closures

While Arizona rarely experiences snow or ice, we may close or adjust outdoor activities due to:

- Extreme Heat: When temperatures exceed safe levels for outdoor play (typically 110°F or higher, or as determined by heat index warnings from the National Weather Service)
- Monsoon Conditions: Severe thunderstorms, lightning, flash flooding, dust storms (haboobs), or high winds that pose safety risks
- Poor Air Quality: Excessive smoke from wildfires or dust affecting air quality index (AQI) levels that are unsafe for children
- Power Outages: Extended loss of electricity affecting air conditioning, refrigeration, or safety systems

Emergency Closures

We may also close due to public health emergencies, facility damage, water main breaks, or other circumstances that compromise the safety or operation of the school.

Notification Procedures

In the event of a closure or early dismissal:

- Parents will be notified as early as possible via text, email, and/or phone call
- Closure announcements will be posted via text, email, and/or phone call
- For early closures, parents must arrange immediate pick-up

Outdoor Activity Modifications

During extreme heat or poor air quality days when the school remains open, outdoor activities may be:

- Limited to shaded areas only
- Shortened in duration
- Replaced with indoor activities
- Scheduled during cooler morning hours only

We follow ADHS guidelines and National Weather Service advisories when making weather-related decisions.

Tuition Policy

Tuition is not refunded or credited for emergency closures. In cases of extended closures (more than 3 consecutive days), the school will communicate any tuition adjustments on a case-by-case basis.

THE BACKYARD SCHOOL OF MESA

STUDENT APPLICATION

Please note that you must also complete the "Enrollment Agreement"

We believe that a child's education is most successful when it is a shared journey between the school and the home. We celebrate and welcome all children, all families, and all backgrounds.

We are committed to fostering an environment of belonging where every family's unique culture and identity are respected and valued.

Child's Full Name: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Guardian 1 Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Guardian 2 Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Home Address: _____ **Program**

Interest & Schedule

The normal operating hours of The Backyard School are 9 AM to 2 PM, Monday – Friday, from July 28, 2026, to May 27, 2027.

Desired Start Date: _____

Please indicate your intended schedule below:

5 Full Days: Monday – Friday (9 AM – 2 PM) 25 hours/week, \$850/month

5 Mornings: Monday – Friday (9 AM – 12 PM) 15 hours/week, \$535/month **MWF Full Day:**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday (9 AM – 2 PM) 15 hours/week, \$535/month **T/Th Full Day:**

Tuesday, Thursday (9 AM – 2 PM) 10 hours/week, \$355/month

I intend for my child to attend on the following days/times:

Days: _____

Hours: _____

Tuition Policy: Please note that tuition is a flat monthly rate. This rate secures your child's dedicated spot in our small-group community.

Quick Questions:

1. Has your child attended preschool or childcare before?

2. Is your child fully toilet trained? (Note: We understand accidents happen!) **Yes**
 No

3. To help us prepare the best environment for your child, please share any developmental, medical, or learning differences we should be aware of.

4. Does your child have any known allergies?

5. Our program is primarily outdoors (unless weather is unsafe). How do you feel about your child getting messy on a daily basis (including paint, mud, and water)?

6. What are you most excited for your child to experience at The Backyard School?

7. What are your goals for your child this year? (e.g., social-emotional growth, academic prep, physical independence?)

8. How did you hear about us, and what is the most important thing you are looking for in a caregiver?

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT & AGREEMENT

Please sign and return this page to the School Director.

I, _____ (Parent/Guardian Name), have received and read a copy of The Backyard School Family Handbook.

I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in this handbook are conditions of my child's enrollment. I agree to comply with the guidelines set forth and understand that these policies are in place to ensure the safety, well-being, and high-quality education of all children in the program.

By signing below, I specifically acknowledge and agree to the following key policies:

- **Tuition & Termination:** I understand that tuition is due according to the agreed-upon schedule and is non-refundable. I agree to provide a 30-day written notice prior to withdrawing my child or pay the equivalent of 30 days of tuition.
- **Safety & Transportation:** I understand that The Backyard School staff will never transport my child in a vehicle. I am responsible for transportation to and from the school and any designated Destination Field Trip locations.
- **Professional Boundaries:** I understand that while the school is a supportive community, staff will never provide medical or developmental diagnoses.
- **Health & Safety:** I agree to follow all health and illness policies, including keeping my child home when symptomatic, to protect the health of the school community.
- **Body Autonomy:** I have read and understand the school's policy regarding the use of straightforward, anatomical language as a tool for safety and healthy body image.
- **Field Trips:** I understand that off-site excursions are optional and that my child will only leave school property with my explicit written consent.

I look forward to a collaborative partnership with The Backyard School.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Director Signature: _____

Date: _____

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Child's Nickname (if any): _____

Primary Language(s) spoken at home: _____

Health & Wellness

- **Allergies:** Please list any food, environmental, or medication allergies:

Dietary Restrictions: (e.g., Vegetarian, No Dairy) _____

Regular Medications: _____

About the Child

The Rest & Reflection Routine: Does your child typically nap? What helps them feel calm (a specific book, soft music, a comfort object)?

Toilet Learning: What words does your child use for the bathroom? Are there any specific cues we should look for?

Social & Emotional: How does your child react to new environments or transitions? What are their favorite things to play with?

Body Autonomy: Are there any specific cultural or family traditions regarding body language or privacy we should be aware of?

Family & Community

Family Traditions: Are there any special holidays, celebrations, or cultural traditions your family observes that you would like to share with the class?

Strengths: What is one thing you want us to know about your child that makes them unique and wonderful?

PHOTO, VIDEO, & DOCUMENTATION RELEASE

I understand that documentation of children's work and play is a core part of the curriculum at The Backyard School. I grant permission for my child to be photographed or filmed for the following purposes:

Internal Documentation: (Documentation boards in class, child's portfolio).

Family Communication: (Emailed newsletters, private class updates/apps).

Marketing/Publicity: (School website, social media, brochures).

Note: No names will be used in public marketing materials without additional express consent.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

EMERGENCY INFORMATION & MEDICAL RELEASE

(This form must be kept in travel kit during all field trips.)

Child's Full Name: _____ **DOB:** _____

Emergency Contacts (Authorized to pick up child if parents cannot be reached):

Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____ **Phone:** _____

Medical Provider Information:

Pediatrician Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Preferred Hospital: _____

Health Insurance Carrier: _____ **Policy #:** _____

Medical Consent: I hereby give consent to The Backyard School to provide basic First Aid and CPR to my child when necessary. In the event of a medical emergency, I authorize the school to contact 911 and/or transport my child to the nearest medical facility. I understand I am responsible for all costs associated with emergency transport and treatment.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

RELEASE AUTHORIZATION (PICK-UP LIST)

Only the people listed below will be allowed to pick up your child. We will check IDs.

The following individuals have my permission to pick up my child from The Backyard School:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

I understand that I must notify the school in writing if someone not on this list will be picking up my child.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

EMERGENCY CARD

Emergency card (front)

Name of child: _____ Birthday: _____

Home Address: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone number #1: _____ #2: _____

Parent/guardian contact:

#1: _____
Name Email address Phone number

#2: _____
Name Email address Phone number

Persons authorized to pick up child:

#1: _____
Name Relationship Phone number Address

#2: _____
Name Relationship Phone number Address

Emergency card (back)

In case of an accident or serious illness, I request the school to contact me. If the school is unable to reach me, I hereby authorize the school to call the physician indicated below and to follow his/her instructions. If it is impossible to contact the physician, the school may make whatever arrangements seem necessary.

Parent/guardian's signature: _____

Allergies or medications:

Insurance:

Physician to call in emergency:

Name: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Phone number #1: _____ #2: _____

IMMUNIZATION RECORD CONSENT

(As a licensed/regulated provider in Arizona, this is required to have on file.)

Consent to Maintain Records: I confirm that my child is up to date on all immunizations required by the State of Arizona for school attendance. I have provided a copy of the **ADHS Arizona School Immunization Record** (or a certified exemption form) to The Backyard School. I agree to provide updated records as my child receives new vaccinations. We have also attached a copy of this form.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



CDC/SGH# or name: _____

**Arizona Department of Health Services
Bureau of Child Care Licensing**

Emergency, Information and Immunization Record Card

Child's Name:	Date Enrolled:	Updated:
Home Address (#, Street, City, State, Zip Code):		Date Disenrolled:
Home Phone:	Date of Birth:	Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> male <input type="checkbox"/> female

Parent or Guardian Name:	Home Address (#, Street, City, State, Zip Code):
Cell Phone (optional):	Contact Telephone Number:

Parent or Guardian Name:	Home Address (#, Street, City, State, Zip Code):
Cell Phone (optional):	Contact Telephone Number:

**I authorize the following individuals to collect my child from the facility in case of emergency or if I cannot be contacted:
(Pursuant to R9-5-304.B, at least two contact persons are required.)**

Name:	Contact Telephone Number:
Name:	Contact Telephone Number:
Name:	Contact Telephone Number:
Name:	Contact Telephone Number:

If Medical care is necessary, call:

Health Care Provider*	Name:	Contact Telephone Number:
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*A Health Care Provider is a physician, physician assistant or registered nurse practitioner.

I hereby give authority to any hospital or doctor to render immediate aid as might be required at the time for his/her health and safety.

In case of injury or sudden illness, I request that this individual be called first:	
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The following individual(s) may NOT remove my child from the facility:

Name(s):

Custody papers have been provided and are on file at the facility. yes no

Telephone Authorization Code (optional): _____

Immunization Information

(A licensee shall attach an enrolled child's written immunization record or exemption affidavit to the enrolled child's Emergency, Information and Immunization Record card.)

For information regarding current immunization requirements go to:

www.azdhs.gov/phs/immun/index.htm or contact the Arizona Immunization Program Office at (602)364-3630.

One of these items must accompany the EIIR card at all times:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of current official documented immunization record attached
<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious Beliefs exemption form signed by parent/guardian attached
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical Exemption form signed by physician and parent/guardian attached
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed Laboratory Proof of Immunity form attached

Notification of immunizations needed sent to Parent(s) or Guardian(s):	mo /day/ yr	mo /day/ yr	mo /day /yr
Updated immunizations received and attached:	mo /day/ yr	mo /day/ yr	mo /day /yr

Medical Information

<p>Is child allergic to food or other substances? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If yes, describe symptoms, name foods or substances to be avoided, and the procedure to follow if reaction occurs:</p>
<p>Is child usually susceptible to infections and if so, what precautions need to be taken? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If yes, list precautions:</p>
<p>Is child subject to convulsions and what should be our procedure if one occurs? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If yes, specify procedure:</p>
<p>Is there any physical condition that we should be aware of and what precautions should be taken (heart trouble, foot problem, hearing impairment, hernia, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>If yes, list precautions:</p>
<p>Additional comments:</p>
<p>Other special instructions:</p>

This **Emergency Information and Immunization Record Card** is accurate and complete, front and back, and was provided by:

Parent/Guardian PRINTED Name:	SIGNED Name:	DATE:

SUNSCREEN & INSECT REPELLENT AUTHORIZATION

At The Backyard School, we spend the majority of our day outdoors. To protect your child from UV rays and insects, we require this authorization form to be kept in the student's file.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

- **Initial Application:** I agree to apply sunscreen and insect repellent to my child before they arrive at school each morning.
- **Provision of Supplies:** I will provide the school with an individual bottle of sunscreen and/or insect repellent, clearly labeled with my child's first and last name. These will be kept in my child's cubby for their exclusive use.

School Authorization

I give permission for the staff of The Backyard School to reapply the following products to my child as needed throughout the school day:

Sunscreen Authorization:

YES, staff may reapply the parent-provided sunscreen.

NO, do not reapply sunscreen.

Specific Brand Provided: _____

Insect Repellent Authorization:

YES, staff may reapply the parent-provided insect repellent.

NO, do not reapply insect repellent.

Specific Brand Provided: _____

Special Instructions/Areas to Avoid: _____

I understand that it is my responsibility to monitor the expiration dates of these products and replace them as needed. I will notify the school in writing if I wish to change these permissions.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

ACKNOWLEDGMENT REGARDING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Backyard School LLC is a private educational institution that does not receive federal funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As such, federal and state special education mandates applicable to public schools do not apply to The Backyard School LLC.

I Acknowledge and Understand:

No IDEA Obligation: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (as it applies to educational institutions receiving federal funds), and Arizona special education statutes do not apply to The Backyard School LLC.

IEPs Are Not Binding: Any Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan developed for my child by a public school district, charter school, or other educational entity is not legally binding on The Backyard School LLC. The school is under no obligation to review, adopt, implement, or consider such plans.

Discretionary Accommodations: The Backyard School LLC may, at its sole discretion, choose to provide educational accommodations, modifications, or support services to students. However:

- Such accommodations are voluntary and may be modified or discontinued at any time
- The school determines what accommodations, if any, are feasible within its educational model
- Accommodations provided may differ significantly from those in any existing IEP or 504 Plan
- The school is not required to provide one-on-one aides, specialized instruction, or therapies

Curriculum and Instructional Autonomy: The Backyard School LLC retains complete authority over:

- Curriculum content and educational standards
- Teaching methodologies and classroom management
- Assessment
- Behavioral expectations and disciplinary policies

The school is not required to modify these elements to accommodate IEP goals or requirements.

No Specialized Staff Requirement: The Backyard School LLC is not required to employ special education teachers, therapists, counselors, or other specialized personnel, nor to provide related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or counseling.

Parental Responsibility for Services: I understand that if my child requires specialized educational services, I am responsible for:

- Arranging and funding such services independently, or
- Utilizing available funding sources such as Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESA), or
- Coordinating with outside providers for services delivered outside school hours

Admission and Enrollment Decisions: The Backyard School LLC reserves the right to determine whether it can appropriately serve any student's educational needs within its existing program structure. The school may decline admission or terminate enrollment if it determines it cannot adequately meet a student's needs.

No Legal Recourse Under Special Education Law: I understand that I have no legal recourse against The Backyard School LLC under IDEA, Section 504, the ADA (as applied to educational services), or Arizona special education statutes for failure to implement IEP provisions or provide special education services.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have read and fully understand this acknowledgment. I voluntarily choose to enroll my child at The Backyard School LLC with full knowledge that the school has no legal duty to implement any IEP or provide special education services.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

ASSUPTION OF RISK & WAIVER OF LIABILITY

1. Program Description and Philosophy

The Backyard School (“School”) is a nature-based learning environment that emphasizes outdoor exploration, open-ended play, and child-led discovery. Central to the School’s educational philosophy is the practice of supervised “risky play,” which allows children to test their physical limits in age-appropriate, controlled settings. Research consistently demonstrates that risky play is essential for building confidence, resilience, physical coordination, and life-long risk-assessment skills.

2. Description of Activities

The School’s programming includes, but is not limited to, the following activities:

- Running, jumping, climbing, and balancing on natural and constructed features
- Unstructured and supervised outdoor play in open spaces and natural terrain
- Nature exploration, including interaction with natural elements such as dirt, water, sticks, and rocks
- Use of age-appropriate tools under supervision (e.g., shovels, gardening implements)
- Gross motor activities designed to challenge physical boundaries in a supervised environment
- Other outdoor and physical activities consistent with the School’s philosophy of play

3. Acknowledgment of Inherent Risks

I, the undersigned Parent/Guardian, understand and acknowledge that the activities described above involve inherent risks of physical injury, including but not limited to: scrapes, bruises, cuts, sprains, strains, fractures, insect bites, allergic reactions, sunburn, and other injuries that may result from outdoor physical activity. I understand that these risks cannot be entirely eliminated regardless of the care taken by the School and its staff, and that minor injuries are a normal and expected part of active, outdoor childhood play.

4. Voluntary Assumption of Risk

With full knowledge and appreciation of the risks involved, I voluntarily choose to enroll my child in the School’s program and voluntarily assume all risks of injury or harm that may arise from my child’s participation in the activities described herein. I affirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the School’s philosophy of play and the nature of the activities, and that I am satisfied with the information provided.

5. Waiver and Release of Liability

To the fullest extent permitted by Arizona law, I, on behalf of myself, my child, and our respective heirs, assigns, and personal representatives, hereby release, waive, and forever discharge The Backyard School, its owners, officers, directors, employees, agents, contractors, and volunteers (collectively, “Released Parties”) from any and all claims, demands, causes of action, suits, judgments, losses, damages, and liabilities of every kind and nature whatsoever, whether known or unknown, arising out of or related to my child’s participation in the School’s activities, including but not limited to claims for personal injury, property damage, or wrongful death. This release does NOT apply to claims arising from the gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct of the Released Parties.

6. Medical Authorization

In the event of an injury or medical emergency involving my child, I authorize the School’s staff to administer basic first aid and, if necessary, to contact emergency medical services (911). I understand that I am responsible for all costs associated with emergency medical treatment. I agree to keep the School informed of any medical conditions, allergies, or special needs that may affect my child’s safe participation in activities.

7. Indemnification

I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Released Parties from and against any and all claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses, and liabilities (including reasonable attorneys’ fees) arising out of or related to my child’s participation in the School’s activities, except to the extent caused by the gross negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct of the Released Parties.

8. Governing Law and Dispute Resolution

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Arizona. Any dispute arising under or related to this Agreement shall be resolved exclusively in the state or federal courts located in Maricopa County, Arizona. The prevailing party in any such action shall be entitled to recover reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs.

9. Severability

If any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such provision shall be modified to the minimum extent necessary to make it enforceable, or if modification is not possible, severed from this Agreement. All remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

10. Entire Agreement

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior or contemporaneous oral or written agreements relating

thereto. This Agreement may only be amended in writing signed by both parties. This Agreement is supplementary to and does not replace the School's Enrollment Agreement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have carefully read this assumption of risk, waiver of liability, and release agreement. I fully understand its terms and sign it voluntarily and of my own free will. I understand that by signing this agreement, I am giving up substantial legal rights, including the right to sue the released parties for injuries resulting from the ordinary negligence of the released parties.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If applicable, second Parent/Guardian: _____ **Date:** _____

Acknowledged by The Backyard School

Authorized Representative Signature _____ **Date:** _____