



2013/2014 Parent Handbook

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Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to The Acorn School for Early Childhood Development. We are so happy that you have made the choice to enroll your child at The Acorn School!

The Parent Handbook is designed to provide families with an overview of our school's philosophy, curriculum, as well as information on the classroom, health and safety, meals and nutrition, emergency procedures, etc. Families are responsible for reviewing and abiding by the policies and procedures in the Parent Handbook. Also, please take the time to get to know all of us. We are here to serve you and your children!

From the Executive Director

The acorn is the proverbial symbol of promise and potential. Just as it grows to become a majestic oak that produces its own acorns, we realize that what we do every day at Acorn is an investment in a better future for us all. It is our conviction of this truth that guides everything we do.

The Acorn School views the personal development and education of the infants, toddlers and preschoolers we serve as a profound stewardship that deserves the greatest resources, best talent and most nurturing attention possible, and this must be made available to all children, regardless of socioeconomic status. Just as the little acorn needs the warm sun, nutrient-rich soil, life-giving water, and protection of the larger oaks that surround it, so too, the children at The Acorn School are provided with all the resources necessary to grow and thrive.

We address the whole child's need for emotional support, intellectual development, and social interaction, knowing that to focus on only one of these areas is to provide incomplete development. To address them all is to sow the seeds of future success. Our mission, "to provide high-quality, accessible, early care and education programs and to advocate for higher standards in the field of early childhood education," is truly why The Acorn School exists.

We want to welcome you and your family and hope you will allow us this great opportunity to partner with you to help your children reach their fullest potential.

Andre' Bollaert
Executive Director

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Our Philosophy

Mission Statement

The mission of The Acorn School for Early Childhood Development is to provide high quality, accessible, early care and education programs, and to advocate for higher standards in the field of early childhood.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Acorn School does not discriminate against personnel, clients, potential clients, volunteers, or any person or group on any basis, including age 40 and over, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disability, genetic information, or any other applicable status protected by state or local law.

Children with Special Needs

The Acorn School is inclusive and makes attempts to reasonably accommodate all children based on their individual needs, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our teachers help create and implement an individual education plan for any child who needs extra support and attention for developmental growth. Teachers work closely with parents, and at the parent's request, with any other professionals who may be involved with the child to recognize and address any special needs that exist or may become evident. Our goal is to work together to create thoughtful approaches that are in the best interest of the child. If a child has needs greater than what Acorn teachers can provide for, the administration will work with the family to help develop a transitional plan and assist with referrals to appropriate child care services.

Teacher to Child Ratios 7.702.55

Group size and ratios determine the amount of time and attention that each caregiver can devote to each child. Small groups create a sense of intimacy and safety. A rich dialogue between caregivers and children is possible in small groups because there are fewer individuals, less noise, and less activity to interfere with a child's ability to learn. Small groups and more staff enable caregivers to build strong relationships with each child and adapt activities to meet the changing interests and needs of the group. The Acorn School promotes ratios of teachers to children lower than the requirements for licensing by the State of Colorado.

Child's Age	Acorn's Goal Teacher to Child Ratio	State Max Legal Ratio	Acorn's Goal Group Size	State Max Group Size
6 weeks - 12 months	1 to 3	1 to 5	9	10
12 - 24 months	1 to 5	1 to 5	10	10
2 - 3 years	1 to 6	1 to 7	12	14
3 - 4 years	1 to 7	1 to 10	14	20
4+ years	1 to 8	1 to 12	16	24

Primary Caregiving and Continuity of Care

Our goal is to foster and continue primary caregiving and continuity of care, which is the essence of The Acorn School and childcare at its best. Children require supportive, committed, and bonded relationships with their caregivers in order to thrive and progress in their development. The Acorn

School strives to match children with teachers (or primary caregivers) who remain with them from infancy or toddlerhood through pre-kindergarten. The children shift classes together, with their teachers, each year while the oldest cluster graduates to kindergarten. This system emulates a family environment within the context of a school and allows teachers to connect with the parents while fully comprehending the needs and learning patterns of their children.

The Creative Curriculum

Introduction

The Acorn School believes that children learn best through play. This is why we have adopted The Creative Curriculum as a framework for our teaching. The Creative Curriculum is a play-based, child-driven curriculum which focuses on developing each child's social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language skills. The Creative Curriculum provides an assessment continuum which is utilized to observe children's development and track their progress in relation to the curriculum's goals and objectives. Through these observations, teachers can determine each child's strengths and areas to focus on for development. Teachers integrate these discoveries into their weekly lesson planning as they develop classroom topics and activities for the children.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held twice annually in the spring and the fall. Teachers use the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool to evaluate each child's progress in the classroom. Conferences are used as an information sharing session where teachers inform parents of their child's greatest strengths and accomplishments and work with parents to set goals for the upcoming months.

Field Trips 7.702.69

Parents are notified in advance of field trips (except for short, spontaneous excursions by foot, such as a walk around the block), and a permission slip for parents to sign is posted in the classroom. When a field trip is scheduled, a Field Trip Form is completed by the classroom teacher and left with the receptionist. This form indicates the destination, children and teachers in attendance, departure time, and anticipated return time. Children arriving late to school should check in with the receptionist to determine how to connect with the group.

Teachers, classroom assistants, and parent volunteers accompany and supervise children on field trips. Enough adults are present on car and bus field trips to allow for appropriate adult to child ratio. When children are transported in teacher and/or parent volunteer vehicles, car seats and seat belts are used. Teachers check to see that all cars used for transportation have the necessary liability/collision insurance. The Acorn School has specific guidelines for all field trips by car, bus, and spontaneous short excursions. Copies of these guidelines are available in the office.

Please note: The Acorn School does not provide transportation for children except during scheduled field trips.

Special Activities 7.702.68

The Acorn School is excited to offer special activities to the children during regular program hours. These activities may include music, yoga, massage, story time, and more. We maintain licensing ratios during these activities with staff and qualified volunteers.

Lesson Planning

Each teacher posts a developmentally appropriate lesson plan in the classroom, visible for parents to review. Teachers use observations of the children, obtained during free playtime and bi-annual evaluations, to develop the topic and activities of each lesson. Classroom lesson plans include activities in gross and fine motor, art, sensory and cooking, music and movement, discovery (math and science), literacy, and special events, all related to one central idea. The interest level of the children determines the amount of time dedicated to each lesson plan.

Learning Environments

The Creative Curriculum is focused on the learning environment and creating a positive, comfortable space that fosters trust, a sense of belonging, and independence. By setting up a safe and supportive learning environment, the message conveyed to the child is that school is a nurturing place where exploring and learning is always taking place.

The physical environment of the classroom is particularly important because it influences the learning process. Teachers set the stage for children to interact in eight interest areas including blocks, dramatic play, table toys, music and movement, art, sand and water, library, and discovery. Our teachers also seek to extend learning outside of the walls of their classrooms with a stimulating outdoor learning environment and appropriate field trips.

Family Style Meals 7.702.65

The Acorn School provides breakfast, lunch, and a snack, all included in tuition, for the children and teachers each day. All meals are served family style and children are encouraged to help by setting the table, serving their own food and clearing their plates at the end of each meal. Teachers sit with the children to create a pleasant atmosphere that encourages proper table manners, healthy eating habits, and conversation.

Please note: To participate in our breakfast program, please make sure that your child arrives to school before 8:30 a.m.

Discipline 7.702.66

The teachers at The Acorn School assist the children in resolving their individual dilemmas by modeling and teaching problem solving skills. Setting limits is an essential part of showing children that the world is a safe place. When the children experience a challenge, teachers move to the children and speak with them at their level. Teachers either step in to offer assistance in the form of loving redirection or offer ideas and help the children develop possible solutions. Discipline is intended to teach appropriate behavior and never intended to punish. We believe:

- Children should not be subjected to physical, harsh, or emotional harm or humiliation.
- Discipline will not be associated with food, rest, or toileting.
- If utilized, separation-type discipline will be brief and age appropriate, and the child will remain within the sight of an adult in a nonrestrictive space.

Teachers are trained to respond to aggressive behavior promptly and consistently. Children displaying aggressive behavior are removed from the situation immediately and allowed to “take space” and calm their bodies in a private place in the classroom before rejoining the group. To help solve these types of challenges, teachers observe and document the child’s behavior to discover the cause or source of their aggression. Teachers also partner with the parents to ensure consistency at school and home.

If the behavior continues after teachers have taken appropriate steps to address it, and it is deemed in the best interest of the child or other children attending the center, the child may be removed from the classroom. The administration will work with the family to help develop a transitional plan and assist with referrals to appropriate child care services.

Classroom Information

Release of a Child

Parents must list, in writing, the individuals who are authorized to pick up their child/ren with the office. A copy of the list is kept in the classroom. Authorized pick-up individuals must be prepared to show proof of identity with a photo ID. School personnel will not release a child to anyone without prior written parent authorization and proper ID.

Please inform the administration and your child’s teacher if you need to add someone new to the list of individuals authorized to pick up your child. It is also important to remove any individuals from your list who are no longer authorized to pick up your child. We cannot release children to minors under the age of 18.

If someone is listed in your child’s file as “Unauthorized to Pick-Up” and attempt to do so, staff members use the following guidelines (not necessarily in this order):

- Ask person to speak with the school administrator on duty
- Call parent(s)
- Call 911
- Take the child as far away as possible from person attempting to pick up

Please note: If a person threatens harm, we are required to release the child and call 911. If the person attempting pick-up is a legal parent or guardian, we are required to release the child unless we have a copy of a court order stating otherwise.

Diapering and Toilet Training 7.702.63

We follow the guidelines set by the Health Department when working with infants and toddlers in diapers. When families are ready to begin the process of toilet training, we ask parents to begin at home when their child shows readiness to avoid the trauma of having multiple “accidents” at school. Once success is experienced at home, teachers begin working with the child on toilet training at school. Working with the families, creating regular bathroom routines, and displaying a potty chart are some of the ways to encourage the children to start using the toilet at school. Our goal is to meet the specific needs of each child, helping to create a supportive transition into toilet training.

Television and Computers

Although we may show an occasional educational or movement video in the classroom, as a general rule, we do not allow children to watch television, movies, or cartoons at school. Teachers should obtain permission from parents prior to showing a video in the classroom. Children are offered alternate activities if parents do not provide permission.

Computers are an asset to the classroom and occasionally used as an additional learning tool to teach basic skills, develop hand-eye coordination, promote critical and analytical thinking, encourage teamwork and pro-social behaviors, practice fine motor skills, and facilitate number and letter recognition. Our computers include developmentally appropriate software that is educational in nature and are used only for short periods of time when they are available as a choice.

Children’s Personal Belongings

Each child has a “cubby” in their classroom, for her/his belongings. Your child’s personal items should be clearly labeled. All parents are asked to bring 2-3 weather appropriate changes of clothing, a child-sized water bottle, and a blanket for naptime. Parents are required to supply the necessary diapers and baby wipes for their child/ren not yet toilet trained. Also, if your child uses diaper ointment, powder, etc. you must provide the necessary products, clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name. These items are kept in a container in the classroom, out of reach of children. Please do not send you child/ren to school with money or leave any item with the label “keep out of reach of children” in your child’s cubby or diaper bag.

Pets

With the exception of classroom pets, animals are not allowed on school property. Each classroom is allowed and encouraged to have a classroom pet. Teachers strive to ensure that the animals are in good health, are maintained in a clean and sanitary manner, and do not pose a safety threat to the children. Children only handle the pet with proper supervision and follow proper hand washing procedures after handling or feedings.

Toys from Home

At Acorn, we ask that parents refrain from bringing toys, candy, or any type of food into the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to schedule show-and-tell days one to two times a month to allow the children an opportunity to bring in special toys from home to share with their friends.

Teachers may set individual rules in their classrooms regarding toys from home to help with transitioning and at naptime.

Birthdays

The Acorn School wants to recognize and celebrate each child's birthday, and we invite the parents to join the party. Each teaching team sets classroom traditions surrounding their children's birthdays. These traditions may include a party, birthday crown, cards from the classmates, and other celebratory activities. Frequently, parents bring in special treats to celebrate their child's birthday. Teachers are required to check that the treats do not contain nuts and that children with allergies have an alternate treat or snack during the special occasion.

Journals

Each child has a journal that captures and documents the progress they make during their time spent at Acorn. When a child leaves our school, she/he takes her/his journals as a keepsake of their memories and adventures during the first few years of their lives. Every child's journal should include monthly entries from the teachers. The entries could include stories about the child, great accomplishments, milestones, activities the child participated in along with pictures or a transcribed conversation or story told by the child. Teachers may also get the children involved in creating their journals by, for example, adding the kids' artwork, writing samples, or dated handprints or footprints. Journals are kept in the child's classroom.

Daily Routines and Reminders 7.702.6

Daily Schedule

One of the most significant aspects of building an effective learning environment is establishing a structure for each day. A well-defined, illustrated schedule is displayed in each classroom so children can learn the order of events that occur each day and know what to expect. Illustrating the schedule in pictures promotes both literacy and an understanding of sequence.

Daily Sign In and Sign Out

In each classroom, teachers use the daily sign-in sheets to keep accurate attendance and help us know exactly which children are present at any given time throughout the day. It is imperative that parents sign in and sign out each day with full signatures. Each day, teachers verify that all children were properly signed in and out. If a child is not properly signed in or out, the teacher will note the time of drop-off or pick-up and highlight the child's name on the sign-in sheet. The parent(s) are expected to provide their signature the next time they are at the school. Completed sign-in/sign-out sheets are submitted to the office at the end of each week.

Daily Attendance

Please call our receptionist (303-938-8233) to inform us of any absences, late arrivals, and early or late pick-ups.

Free Play Time

Free play time is built into the day to allow the children the opportunity to make individual choices of how to be involved. During free play time, the children choose the interest area in which they would like to work, whom they want to work with, and what materials to use. Teachers observe children, ask open-ended questions, and make suggestions that extend children's play and support their learning.

Circle Time

Circle time provides an opportunity for children to develop a sense of belonging to a group. Social skills are enhanced when children learn to share ideas and listen to the ideas of others. Children most enjoy group activities they can participate in directly, such as storytelling, finger plays, music and movement activities, exercises, and games. We incorporate these activities into our circle time to maintain the children's interest and enhance their learning.

Tooth Brushing

Teachers schedule time for tooth brushing into their daily routine for all children one year old and older. Brushing can take place individually in the bathroom, as a group at the table after a meal, or during a circle time setting. Brushing in a large group provides the best opportunity for children to model behavior of teachers and other children and provides the teaching staff the best opportunity to supervise. We recommend that additional brushings take place at home and that an adult do the brushing for the child at least one time daily. Acorn provides toothbrushes for the children to use at school; however, toothpaste is not required.

Naptime

Teachers establish a consistent naptime routine each day for children to understand what is expected of them so they can feel safe and secure. The classroom is set up for naptime immediately following lunch to provide a calming environment with soft music and dim lights. As naptime begins, teachers relax with the children to help them to fall asleep.

If a child does not take a nap, she/he is asked to rest quietly on her/his mat for approximately 30 minutes. After the rest is over, the child may engage in quiet activities on her/his mat, allowing the other children to rest.

For infants, we follow current recommended naptime practices, as set by the Boulder County Health Department. Teachers receive training from the Infant Nursery Supervisor before assisting with infant naptime.

Outdoor Play and Inclement & Excessively Hot Weather- 7.702.41.E

The outdoors also offers many ways to enrich the curriculum and support the children's development and learning. Gross motor play (climbing, running, pedaling, etc.) is key to developing a child's sense of competence, concrete knowledge of what the body can do, and his or her relationship to the physical environment. Children's movement and activities accompanied by spoken adult observations help children develop in other areas as well. Teachers strategically place themselves on the playground to ensure proper supervision of children at all times and step in to stop dangerous behavior and prevent injuries.

Please note: Teachers plan to take the children outside every day. Parents should bring the appropriate clothing to accommodate the child in all weather conditions (winter/summer hats, boots, snowsuit, mittens, etc.). Parents are also encouraged to notify the school if special or additional considerations should be made for their child. When temperatures fall below 15° (with wind chill) or above 106° (with relative humidity), children will be prohibited from playing outdoors. Drinking water will always be accessible to children throughout the day. (edited on 4/23/2014 per licensing)

Sunscreen

The Acorn School provides Rocky Mountain Sunscreen for all the children, with permission from their parents. Teachers apply sunscreen to children throughout the day, as needed, for outdoor play.

Administrative Information 7.702.3

Hours of Operation

The Acorn School's hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Please note: The school does not open until 7:30 a.m. Teachers may arrive before this time to open their classrooms, but please wait in the parking lot until 7:30 a.m. before entering the building.

Available Schedules

We offer three options for full-day schedules:

Full-time (Mon-Fri): 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Mon/Wed/Fri: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Tues/Thurs: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Occasionally, we work with families to accommodate alternate schedules. We require a minimum of one-month notice from families interested in changing their child/ren's schedules from full-time to part-time.

Closures

Staff development, support, and retention are of primary importance to The Acorn School. After three months of full-time employment, our teachers are eligible for paid days off according to the

schedule below. Parents who have chosen our program understand that they are responsible for providing care for their children during these times.

Closure Days for 2013/2014

Labor Day	September 2, 2013
Thanksgiving Break	November 28-29, 2013
Winter Break	December 23, 2013 - January 1, 2014
Martin Luther King.....	January 20, 2014
Presidents Day	February 17, 2014
Spring Break.....	March 24-28, 2014
Memorial Day	May 27, 2014
Summer Break	July 2-4, 2014
Teacher Planning Day	TBD

Please note: Full tuition is charged for the weeks in which these holidays occur and also during any vacation days your family takes during the year.

Finding Alternate Care

We know that finding alternate childcare can be difficult when The Acorn School is closed or when your child is ill. Occasionally, our teachers are interested in watching children outside of Acorn. In addition, there are other temporary childcare facilities and services available for you to consider in the community. Information about these options can be provided upon request. Pre-registration is required for all of the temporary childcare facilities and services.

Please note: The temporary childcare facilities and services mentioned above, including our teachers watching children outside of the school, are independent of Acorn. The Acorn School is not responsible for any situation that may occur with these organizations or the individuals/teachers involved.

Late Pick Up

Parents are asked to arrive early enough to pick up their child and exit the school and surrounding grounds by 5:30 p.m. If a parent arrives after 5:30 p.m., a late fee of \$1 per minute, per child will be charged. When a family arrives after 5:30 p.m. to pick up their child/ren, the teacher on duty will highlight the child's name on the sign-in sheet, write the teacher's name in the comment section, and record the actual time that the parent arrived for pick-up. The parent(s) initials the sign-in/sign-out sheet. Before leaving the school, the last staff member in the building will do a walk-through to ensure all families have vacated the building.

According to state regulations, if a parent fails to pick up a child after closing, and the school has not been notified, we are required to contact Social Services. In the event we have not heard from the parent(s) by 6:15 p.m., and we are unable to get in touch with the individuals authorized to pick up, we are required by law to contact child protection services.

Drop-In Care

Drop-in care is available to currently enrolled families when classroom attendance on a particular day is not at its max capacity. Parents should be in contact with their child's teacher to schedule a drop-in day. Children can drop-in for a half-day (under five hours) for \$50, or a full day (over five hours) for \$90. Please be aware that rates may change on January 1, which marks the beginning of the fiscal year.

Parents pay for drop-in care the day it is used. Teachers highlight the sign-in sheet when a child is dropped off on a day they are not normally scheduled to attend. Teachers note on the sign-in sheet whether the drop-in is a full-day (F) or half-day (H) drop-in. This sheet is submitted weekly to the office, and the Program Director ensures payment has been received for all drop-in days.

Please note: Children enrolled in part-time schedules may NOT switch regularly attended days for drop-in care.

Admissions and Registration 7.702.61

Parents interested in enrolling their child at The Acorn School, should complete a waitlist application and speak with the Program Director. Enrollment typically occurs at the start of the school year, but openings are occasionally available throughout the year. As spaces become available, the Program Director contacts families on the waitlist in order of the application date. Families interested in securing an open spot for their child pay an enrollment fee to secure the space.

Withdrawal Procedures

A two-month notice and two months of tuition payment are required when you withdraw your child. If a two-month notice is given and your account is current, your tuition deposit is returned in full. If you withdraw before the two-month notice, your deposit will be forfeited.

Please note: If you wish to re-enroll your child at a later time, we cannot guarantee a place or provide preferential treatment for your child on the waitlist.

Termination of Services

We strongly believe that with positive communication and collaboration, it is possible to work through any issue. However, when any of the following circumstances exist, it may be necessary for us to ask a family to leave the program and childcare services may be terminated.

- **Aggressive Behavior of a Child:** If, after working closely with a child and her/his family and utilizing other outside resources to help with aggressive behaviors, we are not able to find a solution that helps the child deal with her/his behavior in a more appropriate and safe manner
- **Failure to Follow School Policies:** If policies stated in the Parent Handbook and Parent Agreement Form are not followed
- **Failure to Make Tuition Payments or Consistently Late Payments:** If tuition is not kept current

- Refusal to Communicate and/or Resolve Issues: If parents refuse to resolve issues with school personnel or treat staff members disrespectfully
- Evidence of Drugs or Alcohol: If a parent attempts to pick up a child from school while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol

Visitors

We love visitors! Parents are welcome to visit the school anytime throughout the day. All visitors must check in with the receptionist, sign in the visitor's log, and acquire a visitor's badge. We encourage parents to visit their children at school and bring relatives and friends when possible. It is recommended that parents communicate with teachers to determine the best times for visiting.

Parking

It is important that drivers park only in designated parking spaces in the school parking lot. Please increase your awareness of your surroundings as you enter the parking lot. This area gets very busy during drop-off and pick-up times. Please note that when drivers are backing up, it is sometimes difficult for them to see children. We ask that you take your child by the hand as you enter and exit the building and when walking through the parking lot. Thank you for being safe and helping us to make the best of our parking situation.

Please note: In an effort to be more environmentally conscience, we ask that parents do not leave their cars idling in the parking lot as they drop off or pick up their children.

Financial Information

Tuition

Tuition is due on the 1st of every month. When the 1st falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or a day the school is closed, tuition is due the Friday before the 1st. Please place your tuition check in the Tuition Box located near the receptionist desk. We ask that you place your payments in the tuition box personally rather than handing them to a staff member. If you wish to receive a monthly receipt for your tuition, please notify the Program Director, and a receipt will be provided for you each month in your child's folder. Statements will be provided monthly via email.

Please note: A \$20 late fee applies to payments received after the 5th. If a monthly payment is not made by the end of the month, your child is subject to suspension effective the 15th of the following month. Delinquent accounts are sent to collections after 30 days.

Tuition rates are reviewed in the fall and new rates are set on January 1st (the beginning of the fiscal year). Over the past three years, rates have increased between 2%-4% annually. In cases where siblings are enrolled at Acorn, full tuition is charged for the youngest child, and a 5% discount is applied to the tuition of each child in the family thereafter, regardless of whether the schedule is full or part-time. Please be aware that we do not issue tuition refunds. If your child misses a day, tuition is still due.

Rates for January – December 2013

The Acorn School Tuition Rates

Tuition Rates* for Infants/Wobblers:

Full Time.....	\$1564 per month
4-Day Rate.....	\$1366 per month
3-Day Rate.....	\$1104 per month
2-Day Rate.....	\$794 per month

Tuition Rates* for Toddlers/Preschool:

Full Time.....	\$1519 per month
4-Day Rate.....	\$1324 per month
3-Day Rate.....	\$1071 per month
2-Day Rate.....	\$771 per month

Tuition Rates* for Pre-Kindergarten:

Full Time.....	\$1436 per month
4-Day Rate.....	\$1237 per month
3-Day Rate.....	\$989 per month
2-Day Rate.....	\$725 per month

Scholarships

The goals of The Acorn School Scholarship Program are to provide equal access to high quality childcare and early education regardless of a family's ability to pay and to educate parents seeking information for evaluating and choosing high quality childcare. Please contact the Program Director for more information regarding our scholarship program.

Graduation Discount

Our school year operates according to Boulder Valley School District's schedule. The new school year begins the week following the start of BVSD kindergarten program, typically mid-August. We plan for the graduating children to attend until the last day of the current school year (see calendar for exact date). The Acorn School provides a graduation discount to all graduating children the final month of attendance based on the final day of the school year. It is calculated each year based on the Acorn school calendar.

Associated Fees

The Acorn School, when necessary, charges the following associated fees:

1. Waitlist Application: There is a non-refundable waitlist application fee of \$50 per child.
2. Enrollment Deposit: A \$300 deposit is required to enroll your child. If, at the time of graduation your account is current, your deposit will be returned in full. If you withdraw your child prior to graduation, you must provide at least two months notice and have kept a current account in order to receive your deposit back in full. Deposit refunds are issued within 30 days of your child's departure. Parents often choose to donate all or part of their deposit back to Acorn as a tax deductible donation and can indicate how they would like their donation to be distributed during their exit interview.

3. Late Payments: There is a late fee of \$20 charged for tuition payments received after the 5th of the month.
4. Returned Checks: The fee for returned checks is \$25.
5. Late Pick-Ups: If you are late to pick up your child, a fee of \$1 per minute, per child is charged beginning at 5:30 p.m. Emergencies are taken into account. Please call the school if you have an emergency.

Donations and Fundraising Programs

The Acorn School for Early Childhood Development is a tax exempt, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We are able to provide high quality childcare services to our families because of the generous financial support and in-kind donations we receive from current and previously enrolled families and grandparents, local businesses, foundations, corporations, city, state, and federal government agencies, and community members. We are committed to maintaining this level of philanthropic support to provide high quality, accessible, early care and education programs and ensure that the children of Acorn receive all of the resources necessary to grow and thrive.

Each year we budget to raise a percentage of our unrestricted revenue through activities that involve parent participation. Parents of Acorn are asked to support fundraising programs such as grocery scrip, personal giving, and workplace giving. If you have any questions about Acorn's fundraising needs, or the programs listed here, please contact the Executive Director. We thank you in advance for your ongoing support. All donations to The Acorn School are tax deductible and greatly appreciated. We couldn't do it without you!

Health and Safety 7.702.62

Health

Your child's health is of utmost importance to us. Upon enrollment, you must complete a health form and have it signed by your pediatrician. It is a licensing requirement that all children in childcare have updated medical forms, including immunization records, on file according to the schedule recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP suggests the following schedule for routine health assessments: At two months, four months, six months, nine months, 12 months, one between 15 and 18 months, and one each year following. Please obtain a medical form from the office before your child's doctor appointment and return the completed form signed by your child's doctor.

Sick Policy

The Acorn School asks that parents not bring their children to school when they are ill. If a child has a contagious illness, they cannot return to school until they are no longer contagious. When a child becomes ill, but does not require immediate medical help, a determination is made about whether the child requires exclusion. For example: A child has an axillary (under the arm) temperature of 100° or more and she/he is acting abnormally sluggish and uninterested in participating in normal daily activities.

Teachers are responsible for using the criteria below to determine the need for exclusion. If any of these criteria are met, the child will be excluded, regardless of the type of illness.

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- Illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Illness poses a risk of spreading the disease to others.

If a child has exhibited symptoms of being sick, she/he must stay home for a minimum of 24 hours, even if the pediatrician has given authorization for the child to return. If a child exhibits sick symptoms at school, the teacher contacts the parent(s) immediately. Someone must pick the sick child up within one hour of notification. The child's teacher will inform the parent of the symptoms exhibited and exclusion criteria that must be resolved in order for the child to return. The child is secluded from the other children to help keep all of the children healthy.

Acorn reserves the right for final decision whether the child is admitted back to school. Notes from physicians enable Acorn to make informed decisions regarding the care of the child; however, physician's notes do not override the school's sick policy.

Please note: Teachers must be notified of any medications your child has received within the last 12 hours. This information is important to know, so The Acorn Staff can provide the best care possible for the children we serve.

Immunizations

Please inform the Program Director when your child has had immunizations so our records stay current. In accordance with Colorado State laws, we may deny enrollment to families whose children are not immunized. However, there may be children who attend The Acorn School who do not receive immunizations due to medical, religious, and/or personal reasons. The Acorn School promptly excludes these children from school if a vaccine-preventable disease to which the children are susceptible occurs in the program.

Administering Medication

Medication Administration trained staff administer medication and maintain a written medication log. Prescription and nonprescription medications can be administered ONLY with the written order of a person with prescriptive authority and written consent from the parent(s). Long-term medication must be reauthorized on an annual basis. Over-the-counter medication (such as Tylenol) will be given to a child for no more than three days consecutively. Any changes in the original medication authorization will require a new written order by the prescribing practitioner and a change in the prescription label.

Medication is to be maintained with the receptionist. Children are not allowed to bring medications to school unless accompanied by a responsible adult. If a medication is out of date or has not been used, parents are responsible for picking up the medication. If parents do not pick up the

medication, the school is responsible for the disposal according to school policies and procedures. Disposal of all medications is documented.

The written order by the prescribing practitioner must include:

- Child's name
- Licensed prescribing practitioner name, telephone number and signature
- Date authorized
- Name of medication and dosage
- Time of day medication is to be given
- Route of medication; length of time the medication is to be given
- Reason for medication
- Side effects or reactions to watch for
- Any special instructions

Medication authorization forms are available in the office and your child's classroom. The Acorn School CANNOT administer medication without your authorization.

Over-the-counter medications must be kept in the original container and be labeled with your child's first and last name. All prescription medications must come in the original container labeled with a pharmacy prescription label which must include:

- Child's name
- Prescribing practitioner's name
- Pharmacy name and telephone number
- Date the prescription was filled
- Expiration date of the medication
- Name of the medication; dosage
- How often to give the medication
- Length of time the medication is to be given

Sanitation

We work closely with the Boulder County Health Department to ensure we are providing a healthy environment for children. Hand washing is our first defense against the spread of illness. Not only do the staff ensure that they are conscious of good hand washing techniques, but they also teach the children the appropriate times and methods of hand washing.

We sanitize toys throughout the day with a bleach solution designated by the Health Department, and larger equipment is wiped down at the end of each day. Nap mats are sanitized daily and sheets are laundered on a weekly basis.

Meals and Nutrition 7.702.65

Nutrition

Food and good nutrition is a priority at The Acorn School and vital to a child's development. Our full-time cook prepares breakfast, lunch, and snack each day. Typically, Acorn serves a grain and fruit for breakfast, and a protein, grain, fruit and vegetable for lunch. Whole or 1% milk is served with both meals. A light snack and water are served in the afternoon after naptime. Children are encouraged to try new foods, and our cook strives to meet current nutritional expectations of the community. Menus for breakfast, lunch, and snack are posted in each classroom daily, available online, and written on the classroom communications board.

Breastfeeding and Bottles

If your child is using a bottle, parents must provide enough bottles to be used each day. Please be aware that your child may take more than one attempt to finish a bottle and that we can only heat bottles once. We ask that you communicate with the infant room teachers to ensure there is an adequate supply of bottles and milk for the children each day. Bottles should be labeled with the child's first and last name and will be sent home with the parents every evening to be disinfected by the parents.

The Acorn School provides an atmosphere that welcomes breastfeeding families. We support mothers who continue to breastfeed their infants/children as they return and continue to work. Our screening room and infant classroom offer private, designated space for mothers to breastfeed their children. We maintain a breastfeeding supportive environment through posting and providing culturally appropriate breastfeeding support materials (pictures, posters, etc.). Once a year, we "check-in" with mothers for feedback and ways to continue providing support. Staff communicates the infant's changing schedule (i.e., feeding, napping, etc.) so a mother can adjust her schedule for pumping and/or visiting to feed her infant. (*Liz Edits 5/20/14 per breastfeeding friendly recommendation*)

If you are not able to do breastfeed your child during the day, please be aware that we have special guidelines we are required to follow when handling breast milk. Please help us by following these steps:

- Refrigerate: Keep bottles in the refrigerator at 38-40°. Do not store in the side door of the refrigerator as the temperature fluctuates.
- Label: Breast milk that is brought to the school should be labeled with the child's **first and last name**, date the milk was pumped and put into storage, and the amount in the container. Teachers check expiration dates on breast milk and formula containers.
- Disposal of breast milk/formula: Any warmed bottles not consumed (finished) within one hour must be thrown away. Breast milk or formula left at room temperature for more than one hour must be thrown away. This practice prevents the growth of bacteria and reduces the risk of illness.

- Storage: All unused breast milk or formula in bottles are sent home or thrown away after 12 hours. Frozen breast milk is stored at the school in the infant room freezer for up to three months.

Special Diet Requirements

Special dietary needs and food allergies are given full attention. The children's needs are communicated thoroughly between the teachers and our cook. The Acorn School makes a special effort to accommodate the individual dietary needs of children for breakfast, lunch, and snack. We provide special foods such as soy, rice, dairy free, gluten free, and egg free products.

A Special Diet Statement, signed by the parent and a medical authority, is required for all children with special dietary needs (form available in the office). Dietary restrictions are posted in the child's classroom and the kitchen as a visual reminder to everyone who interacts with the child/ren during the day. Please be sure to keep us updated if any changes on your child/ren's dietary requirements arise.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Acorn School participates in the Colorado Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a U.S. Department of Agriculture program. This program provides food reimbursement provided we meet specific nutritional guidelines. As required by CACFP, we request that you complete an Income Eligibility Form (IEF) each August to maintain our status in the program. Please note that this information is kept confidential.

Emergency Information 7.702.9

Emergency Consent

In the case of any emergency onsite or offsite, by signing the Parent Agreement Form, parents give permission for the school to obtain medical care if warranted. These steps include, but may not be limited to:

- Attempt to contact a parent or guardian
- Attempt to contact the child's physician
- Attempt to contact the person listed as the emergency contact on your child's application form
- Attempt to contact parents through any of the persons listed on your child's application form

If we cannot contact the child's parents or physician, we will do any of the following:

- Call another physician or the paramedics
- Call an ambulance
- Have the child taken to the emergency room in the company of a staff member

Incidents and Accidents

When an incident or accident occurs at school, the teacher notifies the parent or guardian of the child and if necessary, call the physician or medical facility as instructed in writing by the parent or guardian. The teacher informs the parent(s) of any injuries at school by phone or in person during pick up. The teacher completes an Incident Report when a child's injury at school causes bleeding, bruising, external bumps, or any head related injury. Parents are asked to sign the Incident Report, which will be kept in the child's permanent records.

Emergency Evacuation

Emergency drills are held often enough so that all staff and the children are familiar with drill procedures and their conduct during a drill is a matter of established routine. Drills are held at unexpected times and under varying conditions to simulate the conditions of an actual emergency. Teachers have with them the classroom sign-in sheet, emergency contact cards, and their classroom first aid kit. Sign-in sheets are used for taking attendance during a drill or an actual emergency. In the event of an emergency, evacuation takes place as follows:

- Tornado Evacuation: Children exit their classrooms and move to a designated safe location away from exterior windows and doors.
- Fire Evacuation: Teachers lead the children out of the building through the nearest exit and turn to move north east away from the building. Classrooms will gather at a designated landmark on the grassy area in front of the There With Care building. Once in the designated location all children will turn their bodies to face away from the Acorn building.

A complete evacuation procedure is available for review at the receptionist desk.

Lost Child

To ensure awareness of where children are at all times, teachers perform a head count of children periodically throughout the day. If a child becomes lost, all staff on location and the child's parents are notified immediately. If necessary, local authorities are contacted.

Serious Weather Conditions

In the event of serious weather conditions, the school typically closes in accordance with the Boulder Valley School District. There are a few quick ways to find out if The Acorn School is closed due to inclement weather:

- Go to our website (www.theacornschool.org) and click on the "Weather Cancellations" link on the home page. You will automatically be linked to the Boulder Valley School District's home page, where you can find accurate closure information.
- Call The Acorn School main number at 303-938-8233. If school is closed, it will be announced on the outgoing messages.
- Listen to 850 KOA AM radio for cancellation announcements for Boulder Valley Public Schools.

If school closes before 5:30 p.m. due to inclement weather, parents are contacted to pick up their children. Please be prepared for such an instance by informing individuals listed as emergency contacts that if parents cannot be contacted, they are called to pick up your child/ren. Please be sure your emergency contact information is current and correct with your child's teachers.

Loss of Utilities

If, due to unanticipated circumstance, the school loses electrical or telephone service, we will close until service can be restored. Parents are contacted to pick up their child/ren. In instances of extreme cold or extreme heat, a loss of power that results in the inability to operate the heating and/or cooling systems will also result in closing the school.

Communicable Diseases

In the unlikely case that a child or staff member contracts a communicable disease, The Acorn School is required to report the occurrence to the Health Department.

Suspected Child Abuse

The State of Colorado Division of Child Care requires that we inform parents that as childcare professionals, all Acorn staff members are mandated reporters, and are legally required to report any suspicion of neglect or abuse to the Department of Social Services. The Acorn School and the Department of Social Services keep reports, questions, concerns, conversations, and documentation regarding the suspected abuse anonymous and confidential. Failure of a mandated reporter to report suspected child abuse or neglect is punishable by a fine and/or a prison term, and the possible revocation of The Acorn School's childcare license.

Drugs and Alcohol

If school personnel suspect that a parent or guardian is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol when picking up a child, The Acorn School will notify local law enforcement.

Change of Address or Phone Numbers

If, at any time, your address or any phone numbers change, please inform, in writing, the administration and your child's teachers immediately. It is extremely important that your child's teacher and the office have your current information so we can reach you at all times.

Communication and Participation 7.702.100

Communication Between Parents and Staff

Communication between parents and teachers is critical to ensure that your child is receiving the highest quality experience at The Acorn School. Parents are asked to have daily "check-ins" with their child's lead teachers at both drop-off and pick-up times. The teachers and administrators also communicate with parents in several ways including, but not limited to:

- Newsletters
- Email communication
- Parent communication boards
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Notes in your child's cubby or folder
- PIP meetings and minutes

Personal Information

If it feels comfortable to you, please let us know about any issues at home that will help us understand your child's behavior at school so we can better meet her/his needs.

Confidentiality

The Acorn School respects the privacy of all children and their families. Information provided in confidence is only used to enhance the welfare of the children. Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other families or staff members, unless it impacts planning for the child's needs.

The Acorn School maintains personal records for each child at Acorn. All personal records are stored in a lockable file cabinet and are kept secure by the office administration. Parents have access to the files and records of their own children, after making a request to the administration, but do not have access to information about any other child.

Conflict Resolution

Clear communication is essential for healthy relationships and role modeling for children. We teach the children conflict resolution and communication skills beginning at a very young age. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of role-modeling these skills. Parents are encouraged to voice their concerns and bring problems to our attention right away. If, at any time, you have concerns about the safety or quality of our school program, we urge you to take the following steps:

- Address your concern with parties directly involved, in a private and professional manner. Work together to develop possible solutions.
- Speak with the Program Director to receive support and feedback. If there is no solution, the Program Director will work with the individuals involved to discuss options for solving the problem.
- The Program Director will discuss the problem with the Executive Director. If there is no solution, the Executive Director will meet with the parties involved.
- The Executive Director will inform the Board of Directors of the issue and invite them to participate by giving advice and providing feedback.
- If a mutually acceptable solution cannot be reached, the Executive Director reserves the right to request that a family withdraw their child/ren.

- If the Executive Director needs additional assistance, the Board of Directors may be asked to intervene. Likewise, if a mutually acceptable solution cannot be reached, the family may contact, in writing, the Board of Directors who will consult with the Executive Director on an acceptable solution.

Family Participation

We are a nonprofit organization with a strong and enthusiastic volunteer base. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in a wide variety of activities and committees. Please feel free to bring your time and talents to our program!

Our Parent Volunteer form describes many of the ways that parents can volunteer their time and energy. In addition, in-kind donations of materials, equipment, and class supplies make a world of difference, as do financial contributions. We appreciate all of your support!

The Acorn School believes that the high level of parent participation and teamwork between parents and staff contributes to the success our school. We encourage families to come together at our various social events and gatherings throughout the year. These are great opportunities to get to know The Acorn School community better. Please see the Parents in Partnership Policy for more details. This policy can be found in your enrollment packet or can be provided upon request from administration.

Parents In Partnership Committee

Parents in Partnership (PIP) is a voluntary organization, open to all parents who want to be more actively involved with The Acorn School. PIP's primary purpose is to build the community within The Acorn School. For more information on Parents in Partnership, please speak with the Program Director, the PIP Chairs, or your child's Room Parent.

How to File a Complaint

If you suspect that The Acorn School is not following regulations, licensing violations can be reported to:

- The Colorado Department of Human Services, The Division of Child Care, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203-1714 at 303-866-5958.
- If your concern is related to an incident of physical or sexual abuse, you should seek immediate assistance from the staff at Acorn. If you need to file a complaint, you may do so with Boulder County Department of Social Services, 3400 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304 at 303-441-1000.

Governance and Leadership 7.702.3

Roles and Responsibilities

From time-to-time questions arise about the differing roles of the Board of Directors and staff at The Acorn School. While there is a certain amount of overlap in every organization, the roles and responsibilities of the staff and board are actually quite distinct.

Governance vs. Management

In nonprofit organizations, boards are responsible for “governing” and staff is responsible for “managing” the organization. Board members provide oversight and support to staff and do not get involved in the day-to-day affairs of the organization.

Board of Directors

Board members have fiduciary responsibilities and are required to act within their governing authority for the benefit of organization. The board hires and works with the Executive Director to carry out activities such as amending bylaws, approving the annual budget, and providing input to long-term strategic plans. The Acorn board is typically made-up of 50% community members and 50% current Acorn parents. The size of the board ranges from 6-8 members, and it meets 10-12 times a year.

Executive Director

The Executive Director of The Acorn School is responsible for the overall management of school and developing and overseeing the annual budget and may also include:

- Fiscal Management and Control
- Grants Management
- Corporate, Individual, and Matching Gifts
- Donor Relations
- Capital Funding
- Supervision of Program Director, Development Director, and Bookkeeper
- Management of the Board of Directors
- Partnerships and Collaboration

The Executive Director works closely with the board on recruitment, training, and development. The Executive Director is Acorn’s liaison and representative to the Early Childhood Community of Boulder County, staying abreast of changes in regulations and legislation, trends in the industry, and serving on committees and task forces that impact the field of Early Childhood Education.

Program Director

The Program Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations and works to make sure that The Acorn School meets and exceeds state licensing standards. The Program Director oversees all areas of staffing, enrollment, and classroom design/management. These responsibilities may include:

- Hiring, supervising, and professional development of teachers
- Working with prospective families

- Orienting new families
- Managing tuition
- Implementing “The Creative Curriculum”
- Providing teachers with resources and materials needed to implement the curriculum

In addition, the Program Director works with the school cook to create a variety of healthy and nutritious food choices for the children.

Development Director

The Development Director serves in a contractual role, as the agency’s primary leader in fund development to meet budgeted expectations. Fundraising activities she/he are responsible for may include:

- Strategy and Planning
- Individual, Monthly, Annual, and Planned Giving
- Donor Cultivation and Retention
- Corporate and Business Relationships
- Grants and Events Management
- Marketing, Messaging, and Social Media

From All of Us, Thank You

Thank you again for choosing The Acorn School and entrusting your children to our care. We are looking forward to an exciting, productive and successful school year in 2013/2014. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Executive Director. Thank you!