

SAN FRANCISCO WALDORF EARLY CHILDHOOD



THE KINDERGARTEN: *Learning by Doing*

In kindergarten, early childhood is preserved, providing space and time for young imaginations to take flight. Through work, play, storytelling, movement, and the caring guidance of the teacher, a foundation is laid for language development and creative problem solving skills.

The Rhythm of Kindergarten: A steady rhythm and healthy routine help young children flourish. From this place of predictability, children can immerse themselves in the activities of the day. Our kindergarten classes follow a yearly, weekly, and daily rhythm. The **yearly rhythm** revolves around seasonal stories and crafts, Presidio hikes, a “nature table,” and celebration of diverse cultural festivals and student birthdays. Children experience the **weekly rhythm** with special activities like Soup-Making Day or Hiking Day. Oral storytelling also follows a weekly rhythm: children delight in hearing and exploring a beloved fairy tale or folk tale through the week.

Exceptional Teaching: Treasured by children and parents alike, our kindergarten teachers have decades of combined classroom experience. With the help of Waldorf-trained assistants, lead teachers guide and nurture young children through the last years of early childhood.

Daily Rhythm

- 8:10 – 8:30a
- 8:30 – 9:00
- 9:00 – 10:00
- 10:00 – 10:10
- 10:10 – 10:35
- 10:35 – 10:50
- 10:50 – 11:15
- 11:15 – 12:15
- 12:15 – 12:45
- 12:45 – 1:00

- Arrival
- Circle time
- Artistic Activity/Free Play
- Fruit/Bathroom Break
- Clean-up & Rest Time
- Story Time/Puppet Show
- Snack
- Outdoor Play
- Lunch
- Goodbyes & Dismissal

12:45 – 5:30p Optional After School Program

Warm and Welcoming: The smell of baking bread and the sounds of children at play – this is a San Francisco Waldorf kindergarten. Here in each of our three classrooms, children ages 4½ to 6½ learn by doing in an environment of warmth and wonder. Children work cooperatively, explore nature and the arts, and gain mastery over fine and gross motor skills in a two-year program designed to ready children for first grade.

Joyful Movement: Children need to move their whole bodies in big and small ways; as an urban school, we are especially aware of the importance of providing time for gross motor movement. Kindergarteners may work together to build a house: stumps and wooden crates are hefted into position; stones are brought to the site so that the cloth can be stretched for a roof; walls are constructed, and floors are swept. Once a week, children participate in eurythmy, a movement art unique to Waldorf education. This instruction weaves story, poetry, and movement. Each of the school's diverse movement activities support young children in their growth and development and ready them for grade school learning.

Imaginative Play: As a growing body of neurological research confirms, open-ended imaginative play in early childhood lays a foundation for creative thinking in the adolescent and adult. A child who “plays outside the box” is developing tools to “think outside the box.” Children create the world anew each day: building houses, shops, rockets, and fire engines, from simple logs, stones, and cloth. Playtime allows children to process many new things they have seen and experienced in the world around them.

Purposeful Activities: The kindergarten week includes arts and crafts, painting, story time, bread baking, singing, games, outdoor play, hiking, gardening, and developing of social courtesy. Each of these simple activities engages children while supporting sensory integration and the development of patterning, tracking, sequencing, and logical thinking. Fine motor skills are carefully practiced with engaging activities; children paint, draw, cut vegetables, and knead dough. With careful attention to the beauty of language, teachers share fairytales, folk tales, and poetry; children listen intently, forming inner pictures that support reading comprehension and critical thinking skills in later years.

Wholesome Food: Each day, the children and teachers prepare and enjoy a healthy, wholesome and organic mid-morning snack, such as oatmeal, soup, and bread. Children participate in all aspects of preparation and clean-up. A quiet moment and a blessing of gratitude set a special tone before enjoying their meal.

First-Grade Readiness: As kindergarten concludes, children cross an important developmental milestone, moving from the world of the imagination toward a more concrete way of thinking. Our teachers make a careful assessment during this transition to ensure readiness for the grade school academic curriculum to follow.

Our Program: The school has a two-year kindergarten program. Each of the three kindergarten classes is comprised of both first-year children and returning second-year children, carefully balanced to support changing developmental needs and abilities. Kindergarten starts at 8:30 a.m. every weekday morning. An After School Program specially designed for kindergarten students is available until 5:30 p.m.

