



Thorne Nature Preschool Parent & Safety Handbook

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Founded in 1954, the mission of Thorne Nature Experience is to build Earth stewardship by providing youth with joyful, hands-on, place-based environmental education experiences that foster an emotional connection to nature.

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Welcome

Welcome to the Thorne Nature Preschool. We are honored that you chose Thorne to support the development of your growing child through our program. This is your copy of the Parent Handbook. This handbook contains important information that is essential to our ability to serve you and your child effectively. Please read it thoroughly and keep it in a convenient location. Refer to it when you have questions about our school policies. Please let the Preschool Director know if you have any questions or concerns.

To help us provide the best experience for your child, we encourage you to discuss your goals for your child's time with us on a regular basis. The more we know about your child's preschool and home experiences, the better we can serve your whole family. We invite you to work together with us to help your child experience the best our program has to offer!

*Thank You,
Thorne Nature Preschool Staff*

Statement of Purpose

To support the holistic development of young children and their relationship to the natural world, through joyful, hands-on, place-based, developmentally appropriate experiences that nurture the whole child and foster an emotional connection to nature.

Thorne Nature Preschool Educational Philosophy

Thorne Nature Preschool provides an early childhood educational experience that initiates young children into a deep relationship with the natural world and plants the seed for life-long environmental stewardship. Through daily immersion in nature with caring mentors and a focus on supporting early childhood development, Thorne Nature Preschool fosters the growth of the whole child (cognitive, physical, social, emotional, creative), while cultivating a profound connection to nature. Utilizing integrated academic and social curriculum grounded in nature, Thorne Nature Preschool nurtures the well-being of each child while preparing them to succeed in school and in life. Thorne believes that every child is a unique and competent individual, who is eager to explore and learn, and comes equipped with a natural and wonder-filled curiosity about life. By tapping into children's love of learning, Thorne Nature Preschool strives to develop prepared, capable, confident, empathetic individuals who are masters of their own learning, and are inspired to make a difference in the world.

Core Beliefs

- Nature promotes the health and well-being of the whole child.
- Nature is the ideal venue for academic growth, imaginative play, social and emotional learning, problem solving, and promoting active play.
- Frequent, immersive experiences in nature with a mentor cultivates an environmental ethic.
- Place-based environmental education connects children to their local community and is the starting point for responsible citizenship.
- Today's youth are tomorrow's environmental stewards and leaders.

Enrollment

Before admission into Thorne Nature Preschool parents/guardians must read relevant materials, view the virtual tour, and have an interview with staff to determine whether the program will meet the needs of the child and the parents/guardians. Applications to Thorne Nature Preschool will be accepted regardless of race, color, sex, religion, handicap, political persuasion, national origin or ancestry.

Enrollment Process:

1. Fill out the Interest Form to start the [enrollment process](#).

2. View the Thorne Nature Preschool Virtual Open House

Upon receipt of your interest form, you will be sent more information about our school, including a link to view the Thorne Nature Preschool Virtual Open House and other relevant information about the school.

3. One-on-one video or phone call with Thorne's Preschool Manager

After viewing the virtual open house and reading school materials, please reply to the email to set up a one-on-one via zoom or phone call with Thorne Nature Preschool's Manager. This will start the journey of getting to know each other and give you an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

4. Submit Enrollment forms and deposit

Once you receive an enrollment offer and you feel that Thorne Nature Preschool is a good fit for your family, you can enroll your child in Thorne Nature Preschool by completing the online enrollment process, submitting a signed enrollment contract, and paying your deposit and enrollment fee. Completing these steps will reserve a space for your child.

Required Forms for Enrollment:

- Signed acknowledgement form that parents/guardians have read Thorne's policies and procedures
- Enrollment Contract
- Health Form
- Immunization Records or Exemption Forms
- Parent/Guardian Release
- Sunscreen & Insect Repellent Permission Form
- Field Trip Permission Form
- Media Release
- Health Care Plan/Medication Forms (if applicable)

Plus, one month's tuition as a deposit and enrollment fee of \$100

Immunization

Thorne is committed to following the State of Colorado's laws pertaining to schools, health forms, and immunization records. Colorado's Immunization Certificate must be completed for every student each year. Thorne will accept non-immunized or under-immunized children with a signed immunization exemption form.

The records of children enrolled in Thorne Nature Preschool are confidential and available to the child's parents upon request. **If a child attends more than one year, updated forms must be turned in before the start of each school year.**

Tuition and Fees

Deposit

There is a deposit of one month's tuition due at the time of registration for new families, which is credited towards the last month's tuition.

2023-2024 Tuition:

Half Day Program (Boulder/Lafayette)

- 5 Days/Week (M-F, 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) - \$14,890 (\$1,489 monthly)
- 3 Days/Week (M/W/F, 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) - \$8,860 (\$886 monthly)
- 2 Days/Week (Tu/Th, 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) - \$6,450 (\$645 monthly)

Full Day Program (Lafayette only)

- 5 Days/Week (M-F, 9:00am-3:30pm) - \$18,898 (\$1,890 monthly)
- 3 Days/Week (M/W/F, 9:00am-3:30pm) - \$11,188 (\$1,119 monthly)
- 2 Days/Week (Tu/Th, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) - \$8,130 (\$813 monthly)

Early Care (Boulder and Lafayette)

Families can choose 2, 3, and 5-day options. However, the schedule must be consistent throughout the year. (Ex. if your child attends preschool Monday through Friday, you could choose early care for all 5 days, MWF or T/TH.)

- Days/Hours: M-F, 8:30am-9am
- Cost: Monthly/Annual
 - M-F \$102.60/\$1026
 - M/W/F \$59.40/\$594
 - T/TH \$43.20/\$432

Parents are responsible for payment of all scheduled days whether the care is used or not. Credits will not be issued for illness, vacations, or closings due to inclement weather. Annual tuition accounts for closures due to holidays and school breaks.

General Nature Preschool Information and Procedures

Ages of Thorne Participants

Children ages 3 through 6 can attend Thorne's Nature Preschool. Group size is maintained at a maximum ratio of 5 children per 1 adult, unless otherwise noted. Children must be three years old by the first day of enrollment and children must be fully toilet trained to attend Preschool.

Locations

BOULDER

Thorne Nature Preschool Boulder will begin each day at the outdoor play area at East Boulder Community Center before heading to our outdoor learning area along Bobolink Trail. The outdoor learning area is nestled along South Boulder Creek, which offers a diverse habitat for children to play and learn and is just a 10-minute walk from the Center.

East Boulder Community Center: 5660 Sioux Dr, Boulder, CO 80303

LAFAYETTE

Thorne Nature Preschool Lafayette will begin each day at the outdoor play area at the Arts HUB building before heading to our outdoor learning area along the Coal Creek Trail. The outdoor learning area is nestled along Coal Creek, which offers a diverse habitat for children to play and learn and is just a 20-minute walk along a trail from the building.

The Arts HUB: 420 Courtney Way, Lafayette, CO 80026

Hours/Program Calendar

- Thorne's Administrative Office at Sombrero Marsh Environmental Education Center is open Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm.
- Thorne Nature Preschool runs Monday-Friday from 9:00am-3:30pm.
- The school year starts the 4th Monday in August and runs through the Thursday before Memorial Day.
- Summer Session runs for 8 weeks during June and early August.

Holidays and School Breaks when the Preschool is Closed

- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Week
- Winter Holidays (same 2 weeks as Boulder Valley School District)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Spring Break (same week as Boulder Valley School District)
- Summer Break (Memorial Day-second week in June)
- Independence Day (July 4)

For dates and details please view the [2023-2024 TNP Calendar](#) on our website.

Schedule

Below is an example of a typical day's schedule. The schedule will be adapted as necessary throughout the year to meet the needs of the students and varying weather conditions.

9:00am-9:15am	Drop-off, Free Play, Use bathroom at the Center
9:15am-9:30am	Opening Circle with Songs and Movement
9:30am-9:45am	Walking to Outdoor Learning Area
9:45am-10:00am	Handwashing, Snack, and Story
10:00am-11:30am	Child-led Nature Play and Teacher-led Group Activities
12:00pm-1:00pm	Handwashing, Lunch, Nature Play
1:00pm-1:15pm	Clean-up, Closing Circle and Gratitude
1:15pm-1:30pm	Walk back to the Center
1:30 pm	Pick-up for half day students

Lafayette only

1:30pm-2:30pm	Nap/rest time, snack time at the center
2:30-3:30	Art/craft activities, stories, and play in the outdoor play area
3:30 pm	Pick-up for full day students

Inclement Weather Closings

Thorne Nature Preschool follows Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) for weather related closures and delays. If BVSD cancels school due to weather, Thorne Nature Preschool will be cancelled. If BVSD has a delayed start due to weather, Thorne Nature Preschool will start at 10 am instead of 9 am.

BVSD weather related closures and delays are posted on a banner at the top of the [home page of their website](#). Public notice of a closure is posted as soon as possible after the decision has been made, generally no later than 5:30 am on the day of the closure.

Thorne Nature Preschool will notify families via email and Parent Communication apps when there are weather related closures and delays.

Extreme Cold/Heat Policy

In the case of extreme heat or cold that could threaten the safety of preschoolers, Thorne takes precautions to keep children safe. On hot days, staff keep children in the shade as much as possible, and take regular water breaks to keep everyone hydrated. On cold days, staff will ensure children have appropriate clothing before going outdoors, and when outside will stay dry and warm by staying active. Thorne staff will monitor weather and temperatures and follow the the [Child Care Weather Watch](#) chart as a guide for when to retreat indoors. If conditions are in the yellow zone, teachers monitor children closely and move to the indoor classroom as needed to keep children safe and comfortable. If conditions are in the red zone, the program meets indoors and ventures outside only if conditions change later in the day.

Air Quality Policy

In the case of poor air quality that could negatively impact the preschoolers, Thorne takes precautions to keep children safe. Thorne Nature Preschool regularly monitors the Air Quality Index (AQI) through [Purple Air](#) and [Air Now](#) which provide highly localized and real time AQI

information. Thorne Nature Experience follows the [Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools](#) by Air Now. These guidelines suggest:

- When there is a green to yellow flag, defined as being good to moderate and having a PM 2.5 AQI of no more than 100, activities will continue outdoors as planned.
- When there is an orange flag, defined as being unhealthy for sensitive groups and having a PM 2.5 AQI between 101 to 150 ppm, preschool students will have short periods of outdoor activities with frequent indoor breaks based on the conditions and needs of the group.
- When there is a red or purple flag, defined as being unhealthy to very unhealthy and having a PM 2.5 AQI between 151 to 300 ppm, preschool will be conducted indoors.

Thorne encourages families to make the decision that is most appropriate for their child's health and well-being and are welcome to keep children at home if they feel that the outdoor air is not healthy for their child.

Rain Days/Lightning

For young children rain can be as much fun as a sunny Colorado day, if they are dressed appropriately. Thorne Nature Preschool will be outdoors on rainy days, so please make sure to always pack a waterproof layer for your child. It is Thorne's policy to hold preschool regardless of rain, but in the event of lightning occurring within 5 miles of the program location, Thorne Nature Preschool will retreat indoors until the lightning has passed.

Clothing & Personal Belongings

Children will be mostly outdoors at Thorne Nature Preschool and should be dressed according to the weather. Children need comfortable, protective shoes with gripping soles for running, jumping, and climbing. Sneakers, well-fitting hiking boots, rain boots, snow boots, or closed-toe sandals work best. Closed-toed shoes are required at all times.

Clothing needs for each season include:

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Waterproof Rubber boots	Waterproof/insulated snow boots	Waterproof Rubber boots	Close-toed sandals or shoes
Hiking boots or sneakers	Waterproof snow pants	Hiking boots or sneakers	Sun hat
Jacket or sweatshirt	Waterproof winter coat	Jacket or sweatshirt	Light-weight long-sleeved shirt for sun protection
Rain jacket w/hood	Multiple insulating layers	Rain jacket w/hood	Rain jacket w/hood
Rain pants	Waterproof mittens/gloves (2 pairs)	Rain pants	Rain pants
Hat	Scarf/neck cover	Hat	
Gloves/mittens	Hat/ear covers	Gloves/mittens	
Sun Hat	Wool/fleece socks	Sun Hat	

All children must have three labeled changes of clothes:

- 1) One change of clothes will be kept at the Center for emergencies. Please include these items in a cloth bag (like a tote, pillowcase, or reusable produce bag) labeled with your child's name that is easily visible on the outside of the bag.
- 2) The other two changes of clothes will be kept in the child's backpack, which will be with us on site. A zippered wet bag is an ideal storage container for these clothes since this allows teachers to be able to properly store wet or soiled clothing if necessary. Changes of clothes should include underwear, pants, shirt, and socks and layers appropriate for each season.

All clothing should be LABELED, including boots, mittens, coats, etc. Many will look the same. Although staff members will do their best to keep track of clothing, the Preschool is not responsible for lost articles of clothing.

Please provide your child with a backpack every day containing full bottle of water (make sure it doesn't leak), a non-perishable snack, a stick sunscreen, insect repellent (during buggy months), a fleece or sweatshirt (even on warm days), a hat, a waterproof rain jacket (even on clear days), and one set of extra clothes.

All other equipment and supplies will be provided by the Preschool, including learning materials, games, art supplies, etc. The Preschool staff asks that children not bring items such as toys, games, electronics, phones or money from home in order to keep personal belongings from getting lost or broken.

Full Day Care Needs

If your child is attending the Full Day program, please bring a labelled blanket for your child for napping. Thorne has nap mats and sheets that will be your child to use for the duration of the year. If your child would like a small stuffed animal for comfort during naptime, you are welcome to provide one. Thorne will ask parents to wash the sheet and blanket each week, per health department regulations.

Lost & Found Belongings and Personal Items

Throughout the year, a Lost & Found box is located at the Center- please check regularly for lost items.

Meals and Snacks

Children attending Thorne Nature Preschool must be provided with their own snacks, sack lunch, and water by the parents. All food should be ready to serve (meaning fruits peeled, sliced, etc. if necessary), and ideally in containers that children are able to manage independently. The Teacher, under childcare licensing requirements, must check lunches brought from children's homes to determine if they meet one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs. If the child fails to bring a meal, or if the meal meets less than one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs, Thorne will supply an adequate meal. Sharing food is strongly discouraged amongst the children for health and safety concerns. Additional drinking water is

always available to children if water is forgotten or more is needed. Children are provided with the means for washing their hands prior to eating.

We plan to eat snacks and meals outdoors on most days, though we will use indoor space at the Center on some cold days for eating.

Policies on Guidance, Positive Instruction, and Discipline

Thorne Nature Preschool maintains a respectful early childhood environment and supports the social and emotional competence of children. Thorne promotes positive behavior through mentorship, acknowledgement, and encouragement. Staff are trained in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and behavior management techniques. These are practiced daily with children, and individualized support is provided as needed. With a focus on SEL, Thorne Nature Preschool fosters self-confidence and empathy for others through self-awareness, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

When necessary, staff will provide individualized social and emotional intervention support and plans for children with input from parents/guardians of the child. Individualized plans focus on the encouragement of positive behavior, redirection, safe de-escalation, and adaptations to encourage successful participation in the programs. Discipline shall be constructive or educational in nature and may include such measures as separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, or positive re-enforcement for appropriate behavior with the intent of reducing challenging behavior. As a policy, children will not be subjected to any physical punishment or ridicule from Thorne staff. If additional support is needed, Thorne will access an early childhood mental health consultant or other specialist as needed through Mental Health Partners of Boulder County. Thorne staff will strive to prevent expulsion unless absolutely necessary for the safety and well-being of the other children.

Challenging Behavior Issues and Consequences

Staff are trained in how to deal with challenging behaviors and how to develop individualized plans for children who need them. Behavioral issues and interventions will be documented on a written incident report and communicated to parents. The plan of action will clearly outline interventions that will be used and the behavioral expectations that are required for the child to be allowed to remain in the program.

If appropriate individualized plans are ineffective and the child continues to behave inappropriately and/or interferes with the safety or learning of other children, the Preschool Manager will evaluate whether the child may remain in the program.

Field Trips

During field trips, the ratio of 1 staff per 5 children will be maintained, and children will be actively supervised at all times. An itinerary of events will be carried by staff and a copy will remain at the Center and at Thorne's headquarters at all times. Staff will carry information about each child, including their name, address, and phone number of the child's physician or other appropriate health care professional, and written authorization from parent(s) or guardian(s) for

emergency medical care. Additionally, a list of all children and staff on the field trip will be kept at Thorne's headquarters and the Center. Each day that the Preschool participates in a field trip, parents must provide written permission for the child to participate in the activity at a specific location and date.

Special Activities

Special Activities are defined as activities that typically aren't part of the preschool's schedule or curriculum. Thorne provides a list of special activities it offers to parents or guardians and notifies them in advance of all activities that occur away from the center (see field trips). Parents will be given the opportunity to indicate to Thorne staff if they don't want their child to participate in an activity.

Transportation

Thorne may transport children or have parents/guardians transport children on a field trip away from the center. If children are being transported, Thorne will abide by the following policies:

- 1) Thorne will obtain written permission from parents or guardians for any transportation of their child during childcare hours
- 2) Thorne will maintain a staff to child ratio of 1:10 during transportation
- 3) Thorne is responsible for any children it transports and abides by applicable State and Federal motor vehicle laws, requirements for vehicles, and requirements for drivers
- 4) Children are not permitted to ride in the front seat of a vehicle and must remain seated when the vehicle is in motion
- 5) All children must be secured in a child restraint system appropriate for the age and development of each child
- 6) Children are loaded and unloaded out of the path of moving vehicles
- 7) Children are not permitted to stand or sit on the floor of a moving vehicle, and their arms, legs, and heads must remain inside the vehicle at all times.
- 8) Prior to a field trip or other excursion, the center must obtain information on liability insurance from parents and staff who transport children in their own cars and verify that all drivers have valid driver's licenses.
- 9) Thorne drivers will complete a minimum of 4 hours of Department approved driver training

Road Safety

Thorne is responsible for any children it transports and abides by applicable State and Federal motor vehicle laws, including requirements for vehicles and drivers. Drivers must abide by the following rules:

- 1) The driver must wear a seatbelt, ensure all children are secured in a child restraint system appropriate for the age and development of each child, and ensure doors are secured all times while the vehicle is in operation
- 2) The driver will not eat, smoke, or use a mobile phone while driving
- 3) Drivers will operate the vehicle in a manner that is appropriate for the prevailing traffic, roadway, and environmental conditions
- 4) Drivers will not exceed the posted speed limit and will obey all traffic laws
- 5) Drivers will be responsible for paying all traffic and parking violations

- 6) Drivers will not be under the influence of any substance that may impair their driving, including drugs and alcohol
- 7) Drivers must have current CPR, First Aid, and Standard Precautions certificates and will carry a department approved first aid kit at all times
- 8) If an emergency occurs on the road, children should be moved to safety as soon as possible, parents notified, and the proper emergency procedures followed

Television and Video Viewing

TV/Videos will not be shown during Thorne Nature Preschool, and media use will be limited to research for learning purposes by staff.

Bathroom Use/Schedule

Children will always be within a 10-minute walk of an indoor bathroom with running warm water and will have access to these bathrooms throughout the day as needed. Students will always be supervised when travelling to and from the restroom and during use (and they will be allowed privacy during use). Staff ratios always allow for one teacher to take a group of children to the restroom while allowing the remaining group to meet Childcare Licensing staff ratio requirements. When teachers/volunteers/interns are with students, the groups will always consist of at least 2 students.

Thorne Nature Preschool has a bathroom schedule in place that will be implemented daily, including procedures to ask children to use the bathroom at the Center at the start of each class session and before lunch.

In the event of a toileting accident, children will never be punished. Children will be cleaned appropriately by staff using Standard Precautions, and the necessary clothes will be changed. All soiled clothes will be placed in a sealed plastic bag or zippered wet bag, stored out of the reach of children, and given to the parents at the end of the day. All children will be required to have a set of clean, spare clothes each day, and Thorne staff will carry additional clean clothes to use as needed.

Handwashing

Handwashing per the guidance from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Rules and Regulations Governing the Health and Sanitation of Child Care Facilities will be met at all times. Handwashing will always occur after using the toilet and before eating. Handwashing will be supervised and taught to children when necessary.

Diapering and toilet training

Thorne Nature Preschool requires children to be toilet trained by the time they enroll in the program.

Special Needs

Thorne is an equal opportunity employer and is cognizant of both federal and state legislation that supports opportunities and fair treatment for all. Thorne's Anti-Discrimination policy is

outlined in its Employee Policies Manual and staff are advised of the policy during their orientation. Thorne makes efforts to accommodate children with disabilities and who have special needs in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Titles I-V. Our facilities are wheelchair accessible, and Thorne makes efforts to enroll and place children with disabilities in our program.

Due to the outdoor venue and physical nature of the program, children must be sighted and ambulatory to attend Thorne Nature Preschool. There are several hikes that are not suitable for non-sighted children as they are steep with loose rock, posing an accident hazard to the child. If your child has a disability other than those listed above, please contact the Preschool Director to see if accommodations can be made. Teachers are not specifically trained in care for children with disabilities, so often we recommend that a parent or guardian attend to accompany the child. Our primary concern is for the safety of all children.

Filing a Complaint

Thorne Nature Preschool is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a childcare facility. See the Director for a copy of the most recent Report of Inspection. Thorne provides written information to parents at the time of admission and staff members at the time of employment on how to file a complaint concerning suspected licensing violations. This information includes: "To file a complaint about this facility contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203, 303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876"

Parental Notification

Thorne will notify parents/guardians if the program is no longer able to serve children. Thorne will notify parents or guardians in writing of significant changes in its services, policies, or procedures so that they can decide whether the center continues to meet the needs of the child. If a child is withdrawn from a Thorne program for any reason, the parent/guardian is responsible for notifying the Preschool Director in writing and will lose their program deposit.

Pick Up and Drop Off Policies and Procedures

Release of Children

All children will be signed in and out daily by their parent/guardian. Children will only be released to those individuals listed on the "Parent/Guardian Release Form" and the center has written authorization. Thorne staff are responsible for knowing who is on the form when releasing children.

Late pick Up Policy

Parents must arrive to pick up their child at the designated end time of the program. If a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the program, staff will make attempts to reach parents and other contacts listed on the emergency form and the parent will be charged a \$1

per minute child-care fee. If a child still has not been picked up an hour after the end of the program, authorities will be notified and a child-care fee of \$1 per minute childcare fee will be assessed. In any case, authorized staff will remain with children until a parent or guardian picks them up. Staff will check all rooms and account for all children before leaving for the day.

Late Arrival

If children arrive late to Thorne and their group is away from the center or on a field trip or excursion, parents can call the Director to meet the group at their location. The Director may meet a parent and child and direct them to their group or ask the parent/guardian to find the group at their current location. Parents will sign in their child as they normally would for drop off.

Unauthorized Pick-Up

Children will only be released to those individuals listed on the Parent/Guardian Release Form. In an emergency situation, a parent may confirm an additional person to pick up his/her child over the phone through verbal authorization. In the case that someone not listed on the form or verbally confirmed by the parent tries to pick up a child, the child will not be released, and the individual will be asked to leave.

Community

Thorne Nature Preschool values building a strong, supportive, inclusive community between classmates, families, and preschool staff. To this end, Thorne holds family events to celebrate nature and the changing seasons throughout the year. We know that learning doesn't end when preschool ends, and that there is nothing more important than family to a young child. Thorne believes that a healthy, rich, meaningful sense of community within the Nature Preschool cultivates the human connection that is equally as important as nature connection.

Birthdays

Our goal is to celebrate each child on their birthday by honoring their life experiences and interests rather than by celebrating with food. The birthday child will be involved in planning a school activity that they would enjoy doing with their peers. Before each child's birthday we will contact parents to gather stories and a few photos that can be shared with the class during snack time.

Communications

Thorne's goal is to cultivate a strong, supportive, inclusive community between classmates, families, and preschool staff. Thorne has an open-door policy on communication between staff and parents, and will conduct formal conference times to inform the parents or guardians of children's academic progress, as well as their social, emotional, and physical abilities. Staff are available before and after school each day for informal check-in conversations as well.

Regular, ongoing communication between family and school is the best way to ensure that Preschool staff are able to provide a positive, supportive school experience that meets children's needs. The Preschool staff does their best to keep parents informed about daily happenings and program updates.

Daily Updates: via a messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Telegram or SeeSaw

Routine Communication and Important Announcements: via email

Parent-Teacher Conferences: twice a year in October and April

If parents have information about children that should be passed along to multiple people (Preschool Manager, Teachers, other Thorne staff, etc.), we ask that it be sent via email if possible. This will allow us to share appropriate information effectively. If you ever have any questions about the Preschool or your child's experience, please contact the Preschool Manager.

If it is necessary to contact Preschool staff during class time, enrolled families can reach their teacher by messaging through Seesaw. Additionally, contact information for Lead Teachers will be shared with enrolled families at the beginning of the school year if you need to call the teacher in case of an emergency.

Health and Safety Plan

Thorne is deeply committed to the operation of a program that is safe, organized, thoughtful, and will improve the health and well-being of children in our community. To this end, all staff and volunteers participate in a Building and Physical Premises Safety Training, including the identification and protection from hazards and the handling and storage of hazardous materials and disposal of bio contaminants.

At each location that the Preschool visits has a detailed Safety Plan, identifying and protecting against hazards specific to the site. Each day, staff check the area for hazards before the start of the program and actively communicate important information with children.

Illness

If a child is ill, Thorne asks parents to keep them home until 24 hours after children are symptom free or fever free. This is so that children can get better, and it protects the health of the other children and adults in the program.

If a child says that they are feeling ill during program hours, they will be given the option to lay down on the Nap Pad to see if it passes. If after 10-20 minutes they are still feeling ill or if there are clear symptoms of illness, parents will be called to pick up their child.

Communicable Illnesses

When a child shows signs of a severe or communicable illness, they will be separated from other children, the parent/guardian notified, and a doctor or medical facility consulted as needed regarding treatment. In case of a known communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia or shigella, the Director will report to the local health department pursuant to regulations of the State Department of Public Health and Environment and contact all parents/guardians of children in care.

Accidents and Injuries

A written report is submitted when any accident or injury, however minor, occurs while the children are in our care. If the accident or injury is minor, the parent will be notified and given a copy of the written report at the end of the day. For more serious accidents or injuries, the child will be taken by Emergency Medical Services to the nearest medical facility or that which is stated by the parent/guardian on the Medical Authorization and Release Form, and the parent/guardian or emergency contact will be contacted immediately. At all times, staff will have the means to provide emergency transportation to a healthcare facility.

All staff are trained in Thorne's Incident and Emergency Procedures and Safety Plans. Staff are also trained and receive certifications in Standard Precautions, First Aid, CPR, and Medication Administration. Staff must carry a fully stocked first aid kit and Thorne's "Incident and Emergency Flow Chart" at all times.

Medication Policy

All Thorne Staff are trained in Medication Administration, First Aid, CPR, and Standard Precautions. If a child needs medication administered while under the care of Thorne, parents/guardians must complete all necessary medication forms. When possible, parents are encouraged to administer medication to their child prior to and after the programs instead of sending medication. When necessary, staff with Medication Administration Certification will keep and administer medication with the required medication forms (written parental consent AND authorization of the prescribing practitioner). Without these required forms, a child with a reported medical condition will not be permitted to attend Preschool. Medications must be kept in the original labeled bottle or container and must contain the original pharmacy label. Over-the-counter medication must be kept in the originally labeled container and be labeled with the child's first and last name. Medications will be kept in an area inaccessible to children but carried if the group is away from the Center. Controlled medications must be counted and safely secured, in a locked container. A written medication log must be kept for each child and is part of the child's records.

Visitors

Occasionally, there will be visitors to the preschool. Visitors may include staff and volunteers who are in-training, students in an early childhood program doing program observations, guest presenters, licensing personnel, donors, and families interested in joining the program.

All visitors must arrange their visit through the Preschool Manager who will notify the staff of relevant details (reason for the visit, date, names of visitors, etc.). All visitors must sign in on the day of their visit on the "Visitor Log" which includes name, date, phone number, address, reason for visit, and a driver's license number. A written policy regarding visitors will be posted and a record maintained daily.

Parents and guardians of children in the program are encouraged to participate in their child's class with a special activity, supporting a field trip, or coming to observe the day once during the school year. Caregiver observations are limited to one adult at a time and by appointment. There are also times when a teacher will send out requests for occasional volunteer support.

For example, the class might invite caregivers to come share a favorite book or a unique skill or accompany the class on a field trip. These occasional volunteer opportunities will be shared with parents via the messaging app and coordinated by the teaching staff.

Routine Volunteers

Thorne Nature Preschool has volunteers join us on a regular basis throughout the school year. We ask volunteers to commit from one to five days per week (Monday-Friday (8:45am-1:45 pm) for an entire semester (September-December; January-May) or a full school year. Volunteers are supervised at all times by preschool staff, are subject to background checks, and must complete required trainings.

To support the development of children's autonomy at school and friendships with their classmates, current parents and caregivers wishing to serve as routine volunteers may do so at a location or on a day different from the days their child attends the program. We also welcome caregivers of former preschoolers to join us as routine volunteers after their child has graduated from the program.

Identifying Where Children Are at All Times

Thorne Staff will maintain sight and voice contact with children at all times while children are under their supervision. Thorne Staff will conduct silent headcounts every 15 minutes and face to name attendance checks before and after transitions.

Missing Person(s)

Children will be taught to stay put if they ever become separated from the group and call out for help. Should it be discovered that a child is missing from the group, a staff member will stay with the group while another methodically searches the area for the missing child and calls out their name until they are found.

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

All Staff and volunteers are background checked for a criminal history and abuse and neglect. Thorne staff read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect pursuant to state law and outlining the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse or neglect according to state law. Thorne staff are also required to complete an annual Child Abuse Prevention course. Staff who have reasonable cause to suspect or knowledge of a child who has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed a child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect will immediately report the incident to the Preschool Director and the proper reporting agency. If a parent believes that his/her child has been abused, s/he should seek immediate assistance by calling The Colorado Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, 1-844-CO-4-Kids.

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan

Situational emergencies such as floods, fires, tornados, and local shootings require different responses. Responses may include:

For Boulder

Evacuation from the field trip locations on the trail to the classroom at EBCC or to the Thorne Offices at Sombrero Marsh, via the bus. If either location is not deemed safe, depending on Shelter in Place, or Lockout/Lockdown and location and resources available, we will move to the safer location. If both locations are not deemed safe, we will move to the Boulder JCC, via the bus.

The Preschool Director will notify Parents as soon as possible with information about the emergency or disaster via text messages and email.

For Lafayette:

Evacuation from the field trip locations on the trails to the classroom at the Arts Hub. If that location is not deemed safe, depending on Shelter in Place, Fire, or Lockout/Lockdown and location and resources available, we will move to Three Leaf Farms, near the trail and our creek classroom, or to the building that houses Imagine!

The Preschool Director will notify Parents as soon as possible with information about the emergency or disaster via text messages and email.

Natural Disaster Preparedness:

In case of a natural disaster emergency like a flash flood, tornado, or wildfire, staff will immediately move their groups indoors into the Center or the appropriate closest emergency location, will contact 911, and will remain in a safe location in the building, until danger passes or help arrives. Parents will be notified as soon as is safely possible about the emergency and the status of their children.

Evacuation:

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, preschool staff will safely move children inside classroom at the Center or the appropriate closest emergency location.

Evacuation Procedures:

- The responsible staff member should assess their surroundings to ensure children can safely move.
- If safe to do so, staff members will move children quickly to the Center or the appropriate closest emergency location.
- The responsible staff member will ensure those children with disabilities and those with access and functional needs will be accounted for and evacuated with attention to ensuring they have the necessary equipment and medication with them.

Notification and Reunification with Parents

If an evacuation from a site result in moving children to the back-up safety location, and the meeting location for parent pick-up changes, all parents must be notified as soon as possible of

this change and how they can be reunited with their children. The Program Director or Preschool Director will communicate with parents via text messages and email, and if it is safe, there will be a Thorne staff member at the scheduled meeting location to direct parents to the alternate meeting location.

Boulder Location

If an evacuation from a site results in moving children *away* from EBCC, and the meeting location for parent pick-up changes, all parents must be notified as soon as possible of this change and how they can be reunited with their children. The Program Director or Preschool Director will communicate with parents via text messages and email, and if it is safe, there will be a Thorne staff member at the scheduled meeting location to direct parents to the alternate meeting location. The reunification areas will be either at the East Boulder Rec Center or at the Thorne Head Quarters at Sombrero Marsh, via the bus.

Lafayette Location

If an evacuation from a site results in moving children *away* from the Center, and the meeting location for parent pick-up changes, all parents must be notified as soon as possible of this change and how they can be reunited with their children. The Program Director or Preschool Director will communicate with parents via text messages and email, and if it is safe, there will be a Thorne staff member at the scheduled meeting location to direct parents to the alternate meeting location. The reunification areas would be at Three Leaf Farm or to the building that houses Imagine! depending on the necessary safety needed.

Continuity of Operations

In the aftermath of an emergency or disaster, Thorne Nature Preschool will continue operations of the program at the designated safe location.

Shelter in Place

When evacuation is not possible due to immediate hazards or external threats, the responsible staff member will move children to the indoor classroom or other room in the Center and remain there until the Preschool Director communicates instructions.

Lockout/Lockdown

If there is an external threat, children will be moved to the indoor classroom or other room in the Center and a lockout may be appropriate. The responsible staff member moves children to the indoor classroom and ensures the building is secure. If the threat is inside the building, a Lockdown may be the safest response. During a lockdown, the responsible staff member moves children to a room that can be secured. Staff turn off lights, maintain silence, and move the group away from sight.

Protection from Potential Hazards

Road Crossings

When crossing any road, Preschool Staff will implement the sandwich method to ensure the safety of children, with one staff in front and one in back of the group. The 3rd adult will be looking for and directing traffic as needed.

Bodies of Water

While water is a great place to explore and learn in nature, it can also be a potential hazard. To ensure the safety of children, Thorne has specific policies in place when children are in or around water:

1. When children are in or around water, a staff member will actively supervise children and keep each child in their sight, hearing and in close contact at all times. An additional staff member will be called to supervise before the group becomes too large or dispersed for one person to adequately supervise.
2. Children will not enter the water above their knees.
3. Children will not enter the water if deep or dangerous conditions exist.

Flash Floods

Flash flooding is one potential hazard that could be encountered during Thorne Nature Preschool. In case of heavy rain, the Preschool will not go near rivers or creeks. If a flash flood occurs without warning, staff will immediately move their groups to higher ground. This may mean climbing a hill, going to the second story of a nearby building, or climbing on top of large boulders or automobiles. Staff will contact 911 and remain in a safe place until danger passes, or help arrives. If a flash flood warning is in effect, children will remain indoors at the Center.

Hail

Hail is a common weather phenomenon along Colorado's Front Range, especially in the summer. In the event of hail, children should cover their heads with their backpacks or hold their coats above their heads to create a shield. Staff and children will remain in a safe place and protect their heads and faces. In the case of extreme weather that could threaten the safety of Thorne participants, children will retreat indoors.

Wildfires/Smoke

In the case of a nearby wildfire that could threaten the safety of Thorne participants, children will be moved indoors. If wildfires are distant, but smoke is present or visibility is less than five miles (this may change throughout the day), Thorne will also move children indoors. In addition, Thorne's Preschool Director checks both the Office of Emergency Management and the Health Advisory website each morning that smoke or fires are occurring nearby to determine if class should be moved indoors.

If staff observe a small fire outdoors, they will move away from it immediately and call 911 to make a report. If they are caught in the vicinity of a wildfire, cover may be taken in a creek or pond by wading into the water and remaining there. If the fire comes very close, children should crouch down in the water and submerge their bodies, including their heads if

necessary. If Preschool is caught in a fire while indoors, they will follow the emergency fire procedures of the Center. Staff will remain with children and proceed outdoors as quickly as possible. If groups are unable to exit the building, children should crouch or lie on the floor and cover their faces with a wet cloth or clothing.

Lightning

In the case of lightning that could threaten the safety of Thorne participants, children will be indoors. If lightning is distant, the Preschool Director will watch conditions, note changes, and notify teachers. If lightning comes within 10 miles of a site, children will be moved indoors. If a lightning storm occurs during a field trip away from the Center, children will be moved to the class van and driven to the Center.

Tornado

Tornado warnings do occur in the Boulder area and funnel clouds are occasionally sighted. If staff sees a funnel cloud nearby and/or if they hear warning sirens, children will be moved indoors immediately. The group will seek shelter in an open room in the Center, away from large furniture.

Identifying Where Children are at All Times

Thorne Staff will maintain sight and voice contact with children at all times while children are under their supervision. Thorne Staff will conduct silent headcounts every 15 minutes and face to name checks before and after transitions.

Missing Person(s)

Staff are responsible for accounting for each child in their group whenever the class is separated into groups. Staff will perform a silent count every 15 minutes and face to name checks at each transition. Should it be discovered that a child is missing from the group, staff will have the group remain together and one staff member will do a thorough search of the area. Children will be taught to stay in one place if they find themselves lost or separated from the group. Staff will fill out an Emergency/Incident Report to document the incident.

Active Shooter on Premises

An active shooter is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and/or populated area.

In a situation with an active shooter the staff who sees and/or hears the active shooter will use a cell phone to notify all staff of the emergency by clearly stating, “**There is an active shooter on the premises at [describe location].**” Staff will perform a fast head count of children. If children are at a different location (ex: bathroom), the staff member who is supervising those children will be in charge of getting them to safety.

Staff will communicate to the children that there is a dangerous person in the area and will advise them that it is very important to follow directions. Emergencies are dynamic situations. It is critical that staff and children are prepared to react quickly and respond to different scenarios and changing conditions. The plans below are based on the Standard

Response Protocol developed by the "I Love U Guys" Foundation and the Active Shooter Response Plan developed by FEMA/ready.gov.

Lockout-Secure the Perimeter: If danger (shooter) is outside of the building, Staff will:

- Bring any children involved in outside activities indoors if this is the safest place.
- Proceed to a room that can be locked or barricaded.
- Lock all doors and windows, turn out the lights and stay away from the windows, perform a group headcount.
- Call 911 and advise the dispatcher of what is taking place and where the group is located.
- Remain on the line to give the dispatcher any further information that may be needed.
- Remain in the room until the situation is cleared by the police.

If the shooter is inside the building: RUN, HIDE, FIGHT:

- Run:
 - If there is an accessible escape path, Staff and children will attempt to evacuate the premises immediately.
 - Staff will be sure to:
 - Have an escape route and plan in mind. Clearly and concisely communicate to the class where the group will be going.
 - Have children leave their belongings behind.
 - Help children escape with one staff member in the lead and one staff member behind the last student, if an additional staff member is available.
 - Staff will not attempt to move wounded people.
 - Do a headcount and call 911 when the group is safe. Describe shooter, location, and weapons to 911.
- Hide:
 - If evacuation is not possible, Staff will find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find the group.
 - The hiding place should:
 - Be out of the active shooter's view.
 - Provide protection if shots are fired in the group's direction.
 - Do not restrict the groups' options for movement.
 - To prevent an active shooter from entering the group's hiding place, Staff will lock the door and blockade it with heavy furniture. **This is a lockdown situation.**
 - If the active shooter is nearby, Staff will:
 - Silence cell phone and/or walkie talkie
 - Have group hide behind large items (ex: cabinets, tables)
 - Have the group remain quiet.
- If evacuation and hiding out are not possible: Staff should remain calm and dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location. If Staff cannot speak, they should leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.
- Fight:
 - AS A LAST RESORT, and only when Staff and/or Participants lives are in imminent danger, Staff should attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
 - Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - Throwing items and improvising weapons

- Committing to his/her actions

If the group is outside and a shooter is in the vicinity RUN, HIDE, FIGHT:

- Run:
 - If there is an accessible escape path, Staff and Participants will attempt to evacuate the premises or go to a secure building immediately.
 - Staff will be sure to:
 - Have an escape route and plan in mind. Clearly and concisely communicate with the class where the group will be going. Staff should reference site-specific safety plans for more information.
 - Have Participants leave their belongings behind.
 - Help Participants escape with one staff member in the lead and one staff member behind the last student, if an additional staff member is available.
 - Staff will not attempt to move wounded people.
 - Do a headcount and call 911 when the group is safe. Describe shooter, location, and weapons to 911.
- Hide:
 - If evacuation is not possible, Staff will find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find the group.
 - The hiding place should:
 - Be out of the active shooter's view
 - Provide protection if shots are fired in the group's direction (ex: near a boulder or large tree)
 - Do not restrict the groups options for movement
 - If the active shooter is nearby, Staff will:
 - Silence cell phone and/or walkie talkie
 - Have group hide behind large items (ex: boulder or large tree)
 - Have the group remain quiet
- If evacuation and hiding out are not possible: Staff should remain calm and dial 911, if possible, to alert police to the active shooter's location. If Staff cannot speak, they should leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.
- Fight:
 - AS A LAST RESORT, and only when Staff and/or Participants lives are in imminent danger, Staff should attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter by:
 - Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her
 - Throwing items and improvising weapons
 - Committing to his/her actions

Frequently Asked Questions

For answers to frequently asked questions about Thorne Nature Preschool, please visit our website at <https://www.thornenaturepreschool.org/faqs-index>

If you have additional questions, you are always encouraged to contact our office at info@thornenature.org or 303.499.3647

Parent Handbook Sign Off

(Program copy)

My signature below indicates that I have received the Thorne Nature Preschool Parent Handbook, and I understand and accept responsibility for all that is involved in having my child(ren) in the care of Thorne Nature Preschool. I also understand that my child and I are responsible for adhering to all of the policies and procedures as started in this Parent Handbook. Failure to abide may result in my child's dismissal from the program.

Parent Name (print)

Parent Signature

Date