

## *Outdoor Parent and Child Program*

This program provides social interaction in a nurturing environment for parents, caregivers, and their children of up to three years of age. Under our observant eye, our children will have the space to explore their world and to meet new friends. Parents benefit from meeting new people too! Join conversations around parenting topics and interact with your child in new ways.



Miss Judi will share about Waldorf education and child development, and about ways that you as a parent can weave the experience at school into your life at home as a parent of young children.

**What to Bring:** Your enthusiasm for time spent outdoors! Please wear appropriate **outdoor gear** for the weather. Please bring a **snack** for yourself and your child, a warm snack in a thermos is ideal. We will have decaf tea and regular coffee prepared in a carafe for self-service, please bring your own **reusable mug**.

Our morning together begins at 9:00am, but you are never late for Parent and Child. Whenever you can arrive is fine. While the children play freely outside, the adults can take time to observe their children in play, enjoy a warm cup of coffee or tea, visit with each other and perhaps work on a craft project that you bring from home.

**Creative Play:** Because children absorb the world around them and can easily pick up on our feelings, we strive to create a mood worthy of imitation. Children's play reflects their environment. When adults carry with them a simple feeling of kind thoughtfulness, this mood will find its way into their play. As much as possible, we try to create a space for children to play uninterrupted and without commentary.

**Consciousness of Gesture:** Of importance here, and throughout our morning, is maintaining a mood worthy of imitation. Sweeping, returning sand toys to the shed, raking leaves, shoveling snow, can all be opportunities for our children to observe us and our mood. You might find that this habit of being present will help to bring a peaceful mood to both you and your child. *Please refrain from using your cell phone during the class if possible.*

**Outdoor play:** Our Parent and Child program has been very fortunate to have a covered deck built within our outdoor play area. This means that babies and toddlers will have enough room to move around, even when the weather is inclement. We also have a large sandbox with shovels and buckets for children to play with. Boots, hats, mittens, wool under layers and proper gear for the weather will be essential this term. An excellent resource with beautiful layers for the whole family is [warmthandweather.ca](http://warmthandweather.ca). Our ground will be covered with wood chips. Parent and Child is a 'rain, snow or shine', 2-hour morning program."

**Daily Walk:** Following free play, we will tidy our toys and tools away, and go for a short walk in the forest. Rhythm and repetition are cornerstones of our program. Very young children delight in and are nurtured by predictability and familiarity. Knowing what to expect gives them a healthy sense of security. I will be there to support folks who have more than one child, and the pathway is always cleared by the city - it is beautiful, and we are blessed to have access to it.

**Circle time and Puppet Show:** Weather permitting (and it almost always permits), Judi will lead the parents and children in Circle Time, followed by a simple seasonal puppet play. If your child feels hesitant (and that is completely normal), perhaps try observing circle time and the puppet show with interest, and perhaps from a distance. More on that later.

**Snack:** Following Daily Walk (which will be more like a meander), we will return to home-base for a snack. We will find a place to sit with our child. We will sing a simple blessing and enjoy our snack together.

**Settling of Conflicts:** While I have found that it is best when each parent remains aware of and takes responsibility for his or her own child, we are given a golden opportunity in Parent and Child to observe our child – observe how she interacts with others, observe how she finds a place in her social world, all the while being nearby, ready to minimally intervene if the going gets tough.

It is very important to remember that our very young children are just beginning to learn social grace, and simply cannot yet share, apologize or say 'please' with any degree of sincerity. They will learn in time, but what we DO is much more important than what we say to them at this age. Simply saying, “Madison is riding the horse right now,” works much better than trying to explain the concept of taking turns. Acknowledging our children in this way is not always easy, but it gets easier with practice. Together we can help one another.

**Choose a morning that works best for you:**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday**

9:00 am - 11:00 am

---

**Parent Support:** In addition to the program time spent outside, Miss Judi will offer **1:1 office hours** by appointment and send weekly emails containing a brief review of the week together, including interesting information about events going on around campus. They may include helpful articles, podcasts and websites that are supportive in our lives as parents. Topics will always be listed in subject heading.