



WELCOME PACKET

2026-2027

WELCOME TO THE SUNDROP SCHOOL'S *PRIMARY PROGRAM*

Hello Families,

Thank you for your interest in The Sundrop School! We are happy your child may be joining us in the fall as we embark on our 6th year of this exciting and unique preschool & kindergarten program, serving 3-6-year-olds. The Sundrop School Primary Program develops resilient, thriving children by nurturing their innate passion for learning, independence, and the natural world. We believe that early childhood is a precious time of tremendous growth that should be cherished and respected. We also believe that what children are exposed to during their early childhood years and how they are taught to engage with their world are of utmost importance to their future. This is why The Sundrop School Primary program is: Child-Driven, Nature-Based, and Montessori-inspired. Children will build their knowledge through firsthand experiences with nature, classroom materials, and relationships with peers and adults. Please let us know if you have any questions, and we look forward to welcoming your family to our school community!

Sincerely,

Jiana Mammoser

Director & Lead Guide



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PROGRAM *Purpose*

OUR MISSION

The mission of Sundrop Montessori Preschool is to provide a nurturing, educationally-rich, early childhood environment that meets the developmental needs of the whole child while initiating children into a lifelong, meaningful relationship with the natural world.

We are **Child-Driven, Nature-Based, and Montessori Inspired.**

What is "Child-Driven"?

Children at Sundrop are encouraged to respond to their own natural curiosities. Skilled adults trained in early childhood education and the Montessori method, and/or environmental education serve as guides who help children go deeper into their interests. We provide a safe container for learning, exploration, and risk-taking while nurturing them through this critical period of development.

What is Nature-Based?

Children thrive in nature, and regular time spent outdoors is essential for children's well-being and development. There is expanding scientific evidence that suggests that nature-deficit disorder contributes to diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, conditions of obesity, and higher rates of emotional and physical illnesses (Louv, 2016). In natural outdoor settings, children learn resiliency, problem-solving skills, empathy, and social and emotional intelligence. Daily free play in the wooded nature space, playground, and gardening are just some of the ways Sundrop kids engage with the natural world. Screens are not used by Sundrop students, and the use of technology in the classroom is kept to a minimum. At Sundrop, significant time is spent outdoors each day, no matter the weather (except for thunderstorms or sub-zero temperatures).

What is Risky Play?

Risky play helps children develop resilience, executive functioning skills, self-confidence, and risk-assessment abilities. Each time they engage in risky play they are engaging in their own science experiment: pushing themselves out of their comfort zone without knowing what the exact outcome will be. This awareness helps reduce the risk of injury as children learn to identify the point when they might need to stop to reassess the situation.

Examples: Height and elevation, speed and momentum, use of risky tools, interaction with natural elements, rough-and-tumble play



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MONTESSORI *Philosophy*



The Montessori philosophy centers on a peaceful, mixed-age, child-directed environment, where children cultivate independence and a love of learning by following their own innate interests. Children are given long blocks of uninterrupted time (work period) and freedom to explore and master a concept in the following areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, and Mathematics.

Unique learning materials support the mastery of these concepts, and skilled teachers are trained in guiding their learning. Additionally, older children have the opportunity to serve as "instructors" to younger classmates, reinforcing learned skills and providing opportunities for leadership and growth.

In this philosophy, it is also important for children to take the time that they need to do things for themselves. This is not to say we abandon a child to struggle alone. We are there, offering a quiet presence, watching and observing, and occasionally (just before the tipping point of frustration) offering a little point of interest with the words, "Let me show you the next step, and then you try." The more time we spend with children and watch their growth and successes, the more we are able to understand how important it is for children to do things for themselves.

"We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but by the virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher's task is to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for children."

"The role of the educator is to interest the child profoundly in an external activity to which he will give all his potential."

- Maria Montessori



DAILY Schedule

WE ARE OPEN:

Monday - Friday
7:30 am - 5:30 pm

Early Drop-Off: 7:30 - 8:00
***Additional Fee/week**

Primary School: 8:00 am -
3:00pm

Forest School
After School:
3:00 - 5:30

1

Arrival and Montessori Work Period: Individual and small group lessons in the Montessori classroom. Children can eat their snacks when they choose. (3 hours)

2

Community Circle & Story: Greetings, Music & Movement, Review of Schedule, Read Aloud (10-15 minutes)

3

Recess on the Playground or Nature Space: Unstructured free play (45-60 minutes)

4

Lunch: Children eat their lunch as a whole group. Children transition to nap or second work period when they finish their lunch (about 35 minutes).

5

Nap & Work Period: Those who nap will lie down to sleep/rest. The children who no longer nap will begin their second work period in the classroom (about 1 hour & 30 minutes).

6

Nature Exploration: Unstructured time in nature for exploring, climbing, digging, dramatic play, nature journaling, sit-spots, and building. Lessons and games are also available for children to participate in (about 1-2 hours).

7

Pickup & Forest School After School Transition: Parents pick up between 3:00 & 3:15, or children transition to the Forest School After School Program if enrolled.

8

Forest School After School Program: Children who stay will enjoy free play in the after-school classroom, the playground, or nature space. They will also be served a snack.

This is an example of a typical day. Friday is FOREST FRIDAY. On Fridays, we spend our Work Period in Nature Space or on the nature trail. Depending on the weather, we may also spend one more work period completely outside.



PROGRAMS & Tuition



PROGRAM OFFERINGS & TUITION

The Primary Program Offerings:

School runs from 8:00 am - 3:00 pm each day

5 Days A Week: \$7,650 per year (\$765 per month)

3 Days A Week (Mon., Wed., Fri.): \$5,355 per year
(\$535 per month)

2 Days A Week (Tues., Thurs.): \$3,825 per year
(\$382 per month)

The Sundrop School also has an elementary school program for students in first - third grade called **Sundrop Explorers Academy**.

Email sea@sundropmontessori.com for more information.

Early drop-off at 7:30 am will be available to those who need it for an additional \$15 per week or \$4 per day.

Forest School After School (FSAS):

FSAS runs from 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm, Monday - Friday

- Full-time, pre-paid monthly (Monday through Friday) for Sundrop Primary students: \$12/day
- Full-time, pre-paid monthly (Monday through Friday) for RAPS, SEA, and other students: \$14/day
- Part-time, pre-paid monthly (4 days a week or less) for all students: \$16/day
- Drop-in (space permitting): \$18/day

TUITION ASSISTANCE & SCHOLARSHIPS

- **Child Development and Care Program (CDC):** Supports low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. This program is run by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). If you think you may qualify, head to your MI Bridges account to apply or ask us how you can learn more.
- **Michigan Tri-Share Program:** This program is another state-funded program that works with your employer to help reduce the cost of childcare. Parents, the state, and your employer each pay $\frac{1}{3}$ of your child's tuition when enrolled in this program. Head to mitrishare.org to learn more.
- **Scholarships:**
 - a. **Sundrop Scholarships** are awarded on a yearly basis and vary based on our fundraising efforts each year. Families enrolled in Sundrop can apply for scholarships over the summer.
 - b. **Great Start to Quality Scholarship:** Families apply in October of each year. Scholarships range from \$1,000 - \$1,250.
 - c. **Tuition Scholarships:** 5% Discount when you pay for the year in full. 2% Discount when more than one child is enrolled in the Primary program.



SUNDROP

Quick Facts

The Sundrop School is a **registered 501c3 non-profit and a licensed childcare facility**. There are no "owners," and there is no profit being made from running the school. Our teachers and assistants are our only paid staff, and our tuition costs were created based on the minimum amount needed to pay our staff and expenses.

The Sundrop School was created and is run by a **group of volunteers** from the community who saw the need for more preschool opportunities in our area and for children to spend more time outside!



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is critical to the development of young children, as well as the Sundrop program as a whole. The main responsibilities of parents include:

- Completing 15 hours of volunteer work for children enrolled 5 days a week or 10 hours for children enrolled less than 5 days a week (field trips, classroom set up, assistance at family events, special projects etc.)
- Completing Parent Orientation, held in August without preschoolers, where you'll learn what to expect for the coming year.

- Making your best effort to participate in parent/family activities and educational opportunities.
- Reading newsletters sent via Brightwheel and flyers sent home with your child, or other information communicated via email or Brightwheel.
- Communicating regularly with your child's teachers and other Primary or FSAS staff.

