



The DaVinci Outdoor Learning School

2025-2026 Handbook



The DaVinci Outdoor Learning School

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Welcome!

Dear Families,

At the DaVinci Experience Child Care, we strive to provide a welcoming, safe, and educational space for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. To ensure the best possible care for your growing learner, partnering with you is essential. Take the time to carefully read through this handbook so we can start building this mutual understanding. Please do not hesitate with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for choosing us,

Sincerely,

Kristen Tripp
The Executive Director

Mission Statement

Davinci's philosophy centers around nurturing the 'whole child.' While supporting the development of their busy bodies and brains, we also foster children's caring hearts, unique personalities, various abilities and cultural contexts. Within Davinci's engaging environment and curriculum, we believe in relationship building with children and families, creating developmentally appropriate expectations, and facilitating prosocial skills. We value learning through play, peers, nature, materials, and innate curiosity as well as teachers. Expect to find a homey space with inclusive practices, anti-bias principles, and child-centered approaches.

Partnering with Families

We want families to feel welcome at DaVinci. Before enrollment, we'd love to schedule a tour with you to answer any questions or concerns. Once you are a part of the DaVinci community, don't hesitate to become involved. Join our parent council, look for classroom activities, DaVinci events, and community resources posted on the classroom agenda and our online Brightwheel calendar. Volunteer sign ups are on our website.

DaVinci celebrates children and families of all cultures, backgrounds and needs. The program has a policy addressing its participation in Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) and/or Individualized Education Plans (IEP). We are committed to supporting those that benefit from additional resources. This may include anything from providing interpretation services for multilingual families to modifying classroom environments or practices to allow for more inclusivity. Call Maine's Help Me Grow at 211 to immediately speak to someone about appropriate agencies and community organizations that may be able to help with issues concerning child development, behavioral assessment, screenings or things such as food and nutrition and dental health for children.

Continuous Communication: DaVinci typically messages and or logs information and pictures through the brightwheel app. It is the primary mode of communication, though emails and calls to the director are encouraged when needed. Additionally, DaVinci sends out a weekly staff newsletter, holds a monthly parent council meeting over zoom, holds quarterly conferences, sends out an

annual family survey, and is always happy to have a quick chat at pick up or drop off if it does not interfere with childcare schedule and supervision.

Parent Council: Our parent council is a group that meets once a month over zoom for 30 minutes (typically the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00). During this time, directors and or lead teachers will discuss curriculum more intricately, go over any daycare business (building updates, new program ideas, schedule changes etc.), make known volunteer opportunities, and just hear from families on any comments, concerns, or positive notes they may have.

Observations/Assessments: DaVinci strives to offer 1-2 observations per week and quarterly assessments for each child at the center (With the exceptions of weeks with child or teacher absences). These observations and assessments are posted through the brightwheel app for families to view.

Conferences: DaVinci holds three conferences per year (one conference per quarter). Our conferences include a picture slideshow, observations, artwork, and assessments at our center, and an overview of the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards(MELDs) and where your child is within those standards. When assessing children, DaVinci may use different assessment tools depending on the child and the situation. Here is a link to the different assessment tools being used: [assessment tools](#).

Privacy: These assessments are used for educational purposes for staff members, for parents to view, and for conferences. The information from observations and assessments are private and are only given to families. With the consent of families, some observations will be used as samples and examples for incoming families (with the name and personal information of the child remaining anonymous).

Curriculum: At DaVinci we make all our curriculums in house. After assessing the individual needs, interests, and learning styles of the children within our care, DaVinci carefully crafts curriculums that are in line with the creative curriculum, the MELD's, and our philosophies. These curriculums are noted briefly in the weekly staff newsletter, are talked about in depth at parent council meetings and conferences, and welcome letters upon enrollment each season. DaVinci brings the curriculum to life by creating custom class books, yoga sessions, song circles, art

projects, sensory activities, guest speakers and visitors (depending on who is willing to volunteer their time), indoor play with toys and books reflecting the lessons, and outdoor play. All our curriculums are stored on our DaVinci google drive folder which all staff members have access to. If parents would like to learn more or view our curriculum, they are welcome to schedule a time to go over it with the director and or lead teacher.

Finally, since Davinci is a non-sectarian school, we do not celebrate holidays in any religious way. Instead, we make an effort not only to include traditions from all belief systems of the families in the school, but also to foster respect for the customs of people everywhere. Families are encouraged to participate and share their traditions any time of the year.

DaVinci's Day-to-Day

DaVinci serves children 0-5 and has capacity for 81 students. Infant schedules will be based on individual needs. Full-day toddlers and preschoolers will follow this basic schedule outlined below. DaVinci also offers half-day blocks from 8:00-12:00 and 12:00-4:00.

8:00-9:00	Arrival / Outdoor Play
9:00-9:30	Breakfast
9:30-9:45	Welcome Song/Morning Yoga
9:45-10:30	Indoor Play/Small Group Rotations:
	- Sensory/Art Time
	- Story Time
	- Song Circle
	- Snack Time
	- Freeplay
10:30-11:30	Outside Play
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-2:00	Nap/Rest Time
2:00-2:30	Snack
2:30-5:00	Outside Play

This is a rough outline of our schedule. However our schedule changes with the seasons and based on the individual needs of the children and the needs of each

classroom. More in depth schedules will be shared with families as the seasons change.

In regards to Rest / Quiet Time, preschoolers and toddlers are encouraged to rest on a nap mat each afternoon. They are invited to bring comfort items such as stuffies, sleep sacks and binkies. The State of Maine requires that child care centers maintain quiet time for at least an hour. However, if after a period of time a child does not fall asleep, calm activities will be provided.

Classroom Design and Material: At DaVinci, all our toys and classroom layouts are intentional. We pick toys that specifically work with the unit within the current curriculum. Additionally we believe less is more. We have one toy shelf of toys that is rotated every two to three weeks (depending on unit length). Having fewer specific toys for a limited time aids in more fruitful play. Additionally, the books, dramatic play station, library, and motor movement space is also changed every 2-3 weeks (depending on the unit) to keep our space a continuous environment of discovery and excitement. Our sensory table is consistently changed on a weekly, sometime daily basis as well. Throughout each season, we take account of our floor plan and how it promoted learning for the particular children in our care and the curriculum. The floor plan is typically adjusted on a seasonal basis. Our space is customized by the children with their art work on the walls, handmade class books always accessible within our library (including a family book), visual check in and cubby labels for each child, and mirrors for children to see themselves and their peers in the classroom. Our classroom is self evaluated using the state of Maine environmental checklist at least seasonally to ensure an optimal learning environment for the specific children in our care.

Outdoor/Dress Policy: Though not a full outdoor program, DaVinci is a nature based program. We believe that healthy immune systems, healthy sensory development, and optimal learning happens in an outdoor learning environment. Because of this, DaVinci is committed to having outdoor play 50%-60% of the day in warmer weather months (during warmer weather months all our meals will be eaten outside) and 30%-40% of the day in colder weather months. Even during rain, snow, or windy days DaVinci will be outside as much as possible (unless the weather becomes dangerous). As such, children may not attend school without proper attire. It is our belief that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad dress.

DaVinci will provide all outdoor gear necessary to optimize success and learning at school. Here is what we will provide:

1. Winter Hats/Sun Hats
2. Waterproof Gloves
3. Fleece lined winter suit
4. Rain Suit
5. Extra warm layers
6. Waterproof insulated jacket or insulated jacket with waterproof suit to cover.
7. Snow suit or pant that are waterproof
8. A neck covering
9. Sunscreen and face balm (for cold windy days)
10. Waterproof soft boots for new walking toddlers for winter.

Parents will be responsible for bringing:

1. Appropriate footwear
2. Multiple extra pairs of clothing, socks, and underwear for children potty training.
3. Bug spray if desired

All children will have the proper attire in their cubbies and can be dressed by families in the morning. At the end of the week (or if it is a particularly wet or muddy day) the gear will be washed and dried on site and returned to each child's cubby.

Autonomy With Dressing: During the spring and fall months, temperatures can be very volatile. Children may feel cold and put on jackets and shed layers as they start to move their bodies and heat up. Though we encourage children to wear their gear on these warmer days, we also allow children to check in with their bodies. Any child upset or stagnant will be prompted to put their outdoor gear back on. Children over two who are happily playing and have checked in with their bodies and have decided not to wear their outdoor gear, will not be forced to put it back on.

Nutrition: DaVinci is passionate about serving balanced, healthy, and diverse foods to children in our care. We believe that nutrition plays a vital role in learning,

development, and growth. We focus on simple carbs, proteins and fats, and low and natural sugars. We offer 4 meal periods throughout the day:

1. Breakfast
2. Mid Morning snack
3. Lunch
4. Afternoon Snack

Breakfast: Our Breakfast focuses on grains and proteins such as local eggs, sausage, ham, toast from homemade bread, low sugar homemade muffins and oatmeal. It may contain some fats and or natural sugars with jam, butter, or peanut butter, added to the toast.

Lunch: Our lunches focus on Protein based foods and are meant to expand children's palates and fuel their growing busy bodies. Each day of the week is a different focus for our menu.

Monday - Noodle/Casserole Day

Tuesday - Rice Bowls

Wednesday - Sandwich Day

Thursday - Soup Day (also may include leftovers from the past three days)

Friday - Crazy Day - Could be seafood, tacos, casseroles etc.

Afternoon Snack: This snack will be a savory snack and includes lots of fats and proteins including dips (hummus, guacamole etc.) and chips (pita, tortilla etc.), vegetables, cheese, deli meats, and crackers.

Our menu will be amended based on any allergies or religious abstentions. When planning our meals, we try to buy locally and provide homemade meals where possible. DaVinci does not provide high sugar snacks, desserts, or snack food and packaged foods. During holidays, birthdays, or other special occasions, DaVinci does permit families to bring in sweet treats or for the class to make sweet treats together.

On an annual basis, DaVinci will self assess our menu and nutrition plan to make sure it is meeting standards of our nutrition plan. To see a full menu of our offered meals [click here](#).

Closings and Cancellations: DaVinci follows the Falmouth School District for vacations and weather closures. [Click Here](#) for a link to the Falmouth School District schedule. Please note that early release days are not included in DaVinci closures. The gray dots on the calendar indicate district wide closures for break and holidays. DaVinci will be open in the summer, but our preschool will close and all preschoolers will be eligible to join our summer camp held at a variety of locations.

In the event of a power outage or snow storm, DaVinci will use its best judgment whether to stay open or close (often mirroring the Falmouth School District). At least two hours notice will be given (unless we have to close during the day or unforeseen events lead to last minute closures or delays) over the brightwheel app.

Professional Development Days: The state mandate is that all full time daycare employees must have 30 PD hours a year and part time employees must have 20 hours of PD a year. Each season DaVinci will close one day for professional development. Families will be given notice at least one month in advance.

Procedures and Finances:

DaVinci uses the Brightwheel app for all enrollment paperwork, billing and check in/out. The DaVinci Experience Child Care offers full-time and half-day child care Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. If there is an opening at DaVinci, Priority is given to siblings when possible. Pricing per week is as follows:

Infants— \$390

Infant Half Day—\$250

Toddlers— \$360

Toddler Half Day—\$230

Preschoolers— \$340

Half Day Preschoolers—\$220

Full Time Meal Plan - \$50 per week

Part Time Meal Plan - \$30 per week

One Time Gear Fee - \$225 (unless a grant is awarded to the center in which case it is free)

Enrollment Paperwork: All families are required to fill out an enrollment form and a tuition agreement form before starting at the daycare. Additionally, all families must

send in a copy of the licenses of all authorized persons for pick up, and must upload immunization records within 30 days of enrollment.

Billing: Families will be required to put down a non refundable deposit which counts towards their tuition. They will then be billed on a monthly basis. All enrollment is on an annual basis. If families decide to pull their child mid-season, a 30 day notice is required. If your child is expelled from or leaves the center, they are still financially obligated to pay through the 30 days or until a replacement for their spot has been filled.

Daily Check-in and Check out: The Family understands and agrees to check-in and check-out their child/ren each drop-off and pick-up period.

- In order to check in and check out, you must first be registered on the Brightwheel app and download the app to your mobile device
- When you are on site to pick up and drop off, open your app, click the check-in or check-out kiosk.
- Scan the QR code we have posted in the classrooms,, with the teacher, or in the entrance of the building. **DO NOT** scan the code with your camera, make sure to scan through the brightwheel app.
- Once you have scanned the QR code, you will be prompted to enter your 4-digit private code found on the bottom of your brightwheel app.

You can customize this 4 digit code if you would like

For more in depth directions about how to sign in through the brightwheel app please [click here](#).

If for any reason the app is not working, it is your responsibility at that moment to let a staff member know to time stamp your arrival and/or departure.

Checking in and Checking out your child/children each day helps the Center maintain professional and state standards, manage employee time, and keep track of attendance.

If someone not yet on a child's approved pick up list is to pick them up, written consent is necessary. This can also be done over email. In addition, a picture or copy of that adult's driver's license is required which will be confirmed upon arrival.

Late drop offs/early Pickups: If you need to pick up or drop off your child late or pick them up early, please communicate with staff members through brightwheel in a timely manner.

If you drop your child off late, it is your responsibility to have them properly outfitted or sunscreened (if they are outdoors), in the proper place (with their class), and fed if they have missed any meals.

If you are picking up early, you are responsible for getting your child ready and packing them up as it may not always be something a staff member is able to do as they continue caring for all the children at the center while sticking to the daily schedule.

It is HIGHLY recommended not to pick your child up or drop them off during nap time (12:00-2:00). Not only is this a time period where staff members need an uninterrupted quiet environment to help children get to nap, but it is also a time where staff take their breaks, get important admin work done, and clean, prep food, and turn the space over to the next activities.

If you need to pick up your child from the center and plan to drop them back off later on, it is still required that you check them out of the center and back in when you return.

Additional Information and Fees:

- In the event you do not check-in your child/children, you will not receive the daily log or any pictures.
- In the event of a late pick up, Family and Guardians will be granted a one-time allowance within 15 minutes. Following that instance, notification will be sent by email that there will be a charge of \$1 for every minute past the agreed upon pick up arrangement placed on the credit card or withdrawn from the bank account the Center has on file for any future late pick ups.
- Upon enrollment, there will be a full time processing fee of \$70 and a part time fee of \$50. If you forfeit your child's spot after this, there is no refund available.

The Rights of Children, Families, and Educators

Here at Davinci, we stress our ethical obligations to the children and families of our center as well as to each other. Please read through the following core values we adhere to:

Rights of Children:

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical, sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the child.
3. Each child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each child must be provided childcare services without regard to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the provider and staff members.
6. Each child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the provider.
7. Each child has a right to developmentally appropriate activities, materials and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to provider policies and practices.

Rights of Families:

1. A child's family or legal guardian must be fully informed of items or services which are included in the rate they pay for childcare services.
2. A child's family or legal guardian has the right to be fully informed of findings of the most recent inspection conducted by the department. The provider must inform them that the licensing inspection results are public information and inspection results must be posted in a prominent place on the premises.
3. Families or legal guardians must be notified by the provider within two business days of any actions taken against the provider by the department, including but not limited to decisions to issue conditional licenses, refusal to renew a license or to impose fines or other sanctions.

For more information please visit [First Focus Campaign for Children:](#)

Employee Handbook:

At DaVinci, we value our employees and empower them to grow their professional development and positive work life. Here is some information on our employees' qualifications, training, and vacation policies. If you are an employee looking for your job description, salary information or other details, please see your employee onboarding package.

Note: when the director is not present, the acting director will be a lead teacher of at least 21 years of age. Any employees or volunteers not yet 18-years-old will not be left unsupervised with children.

Employee Qualifications: DaVinci strives to hire candidates with education, experience, and enthusiasm around working with young children. Expectations include prior work in child care, high school diploma, fingerprinting and background check, CPR certification, mandated reporter certification, and three references. Without an early childhood education degree or certification, lead teachers should have a desire for continuing education.

Professional Development: The state mandate is that all full time daycare employees must have 30 hours of professional development a year and all part time employees must have 20 hours of professional development a year. Each season, DaVinci will close one day for professional development. Families will be given notice at least one month in advance. Employee professional development includes but is not limited to:

1. 3-4 Staff professional development days with inhouse training, team building, group training, and strategy planning.
2. Periodical MRTQ training required to maintain our current rising star standing.
3. Monthly staff observations by the director.
4. 2-3 Staff reviews with the director.
5. 1-2 Professional Development reviews with the director.
6. Weekly check-ins with teachers and directors about curriculum and student plans.
7. A minimum of 1 hour per week (during paid time) for each lead teacher and director for curriculum planning.

Employee Vacation Policy: Employees follow the closings and cancellations calendar above. For those salaried, this qualifies as paid time off based on average rate and schedule. What's more, salaried staff members are entitled to 40 hours of paid vacation which may not be accumulated from year-to-year. All salaried employees also have 24 hours of sick time to be used for mental health or sick time off. Vacation days and sick time are accumulated throughout the year. If you would like to use them all at once for an emergency or vacation date, reach out to your director for approval. The only exception is maternity leave. If a salaried employee is interested in obtaining maternity leave, it is suggested that they consult the director before becoming pregnant. They can choose to keep their medical needs or family planning confidential, but may ask the director to help them obtain and supplement the cost of a short term disability policy. This policy can then act as maternity leave.

Eligibility of vacation time is established upon completion of four working months from the date of hire. Any vacation time should be submitted for approval by the director as far in advance as possible. Summer vacation requests are due May 1st. Unless given prior approval, employees may only take one week off during the summer months, considered June 15th through September 15th. Also due to staffing, no more than one employee can take vacation at the same time. In the event of conflicting requests, eligibility will be based on a first come, first serve basis.

interpretation for English Language Learners: At Davinci we employ staff from all ethnic backgrounds. The primary language we communicate in is English. If you communicate more comfortably in another language, please let us know. We will make every effort to make our materials and communications accessible for you in your home language.

Health and Safety

At DaVinci, health and safety are of the utmost importance to us. As such, we need to partner with families to make sure that your child(ren) are taken care of. The following speaks to procedures surrounding health and safety.

Open Communication with Licensing and Other Investigations: At DaVinci, transparency is extremely vital to the safety of children and staff members. As such, DaVinci will always be open and honest with the state licensor regarding any complaints, allegations, or concerns. To avoid any conflicts of interest, all staff members are encouraged to report concerns to the state along with or instead of the director.

Medication Administration: Families can request medication forms at any time. Medications should be provided in the original container with the pharmacist or manufacturer's label, the child's name, name of medication, and dosage instructions clearly written. Staff members will keep logs when administered. Prescription medications must have a doctor's note and written consent from the guardian before DaVinci can administer.

When medication is administered by an adult staff member, it will be reported through the brightwheel app under the medication tab. All medications will be kept in a staff restricted area inaccessible to children.

Safe Sleep Policy: When it comes to the safety of sleeping young children, DaVinci follows current best practices. To promote quality rest and prevent the unlikely occurrence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the American Academy of Pediatrics currently recommends that children under 1-year-old sleep on their backs without swaddles, blankets, stuffies, or other items. DaVinci will allow a child to sleep on their side or stomach as the child's doctor has given verbal or written consent.

Reporting Serious Accidents, Injuries, or Death: All staff are required to be CPR and first aid certified in the event of an accident. After tending to the needs of the child, the family will be contacted. Therefore, it's important that all contact information is up to date. Authorization for treatment must be signed at the time of enrollment to ensure your child receives necessary emergency treatment.

Accident reports will be written and shared with families. Serious injuries including but not limited to broken bones, burns, head trauma death must also be reported to the Department of Health and Human Services (D.H.H.S.). Finally, families are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation if required.

Incidents, Suspensions, and Expulsions: At DaVinci, we value the comfort and safety of all of our students. In the event that a child creates an unsafe environment for themselves or those around them, an incident report will be written up. This can be shared with the families and signed at pick up. In the event that similar incidents continue, we recommend scheduling a meeting to discuss ways to better meet the learner's needs. A positive behavioral support plan can be developed if necessary.

After parent involvement and two warnings, DaVinci reserves the right to suspend the child without a refund. If the behavior occurs again, the student will be expelled without a refund. Situations that could lead to suspension or expulsion could include but are not limited to: verbal disruptions, bolting, property destruction, and repetitive aggressive behaviors such as biting. Additionally, all weapons are prohibited at DaVinci.

For families looking for support for children exhibiting dangerous or concerning physical or social/emotional behaviors, [Here's a quick link to what Maine offers](#). Additional resources can also be found [here](#).

Release of Children: To ensure the safety of each child, they will only be released to a parent or a person who is listed on the pick-up authorization section of our enrollment form and whose license we have on file. To add anyone to this list, we will need written consent from a guardian and a picture of the license center prior to pick up. We will check photo identification when they arrive

Emergency Procedures: DaVinci has written policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies and natural disasters posted in the child care center. In the unlikely event, children will be evacuated to an emergency location, and families will be notified as soon as possible. If you would like to see the full copy of our emergency response plans, click the link to the [YIKES Plan](#).

In accordance with state law, DaVinci has one fire drill per month and two emergency evacuation drills per year. A log of the drills are kept on file for the DHHS during inspections. If any parent is interested in reviewing our fire drill policies or our logs, we are happy to share that information.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: Child care givers are considered mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. Maine law defines this as “a threat to a child's

health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these.” Staff members with any information regarding suspected child abuse and neglect should immediately seek out the director and the director (or some named person) must make an official hotline report. Confidential reports are made to the Maine Abuse Hotline: 1-800-452-1999. If you would like more information, [click here](#).

Management of Communicable Illnesses: The State of Maine requires that a record of current immunizations be on file within 30 days following admission. Immunization records must be certified by your child’s physician or nurse practitioner and updated yearly in accordance with the recommended schedule for routine health supervision of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Per State of Maine law, exemption from immunization requirements is limited to medical reasons. In the event of a disease outbreak as defined by CDC reporting standards, a child not immunized must be excluded from the child care in accordance with CDC guidance or until the child receives the necessary immunization or proof of immunity is on record.

For the health and safety of your child and all of the children in our child care, please do not bring your child to daycare sick. If a child becomes ill during child care hours the family will be asked to pick up their child within one hour of being notified. If they are not available, the emergency contact person will be contacted.

After 24 hours symptom free, children can return post fever, vomiting, diarrhea. A full 24 hours after starting treatment for pink eye, scabies, head lice, impetigo, and strep throat, a child can return to DaVinci. Any vaccination requires a 24 hour recovery period. A doctor’s note is required for chicken pox, pertussis, mumps, hepatitis A virus, measles, rubella, tuberculosis, RSV and other serious communicable illnesses.

All undefined rashes or bug bites will be reported to parents or guardians. All rashes or bug bites lasting more than 24 hours without clear explanation or doctor’s notes will be reported to the state. There is no exception for children who are teething who are experiencing a rash or fever. In the event of a browntail moth outbreak, DaVinci will close down part or all of its outdoor areas (depending on how bad of a presence there is) while the situation is monitored and exterminated.

During this time, all children experiencing a rash during the browntail moth outbreak, must stay home until the rash clears up.

Note: child care fees will remain due as normal regardless of how long your child is out sick.