



# FAMILY HANDBOOK



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**Laragh Kavanaugh**  
Executive Director

## **Welcome to the Ketcha Outdoors community!**

Ketcha Outdoors is a year-round charitable non-profit organization serving the southern Maine community with programs in youth development, family enrichment, and summer day camping. We strive to offer opportunities for children, youth, and families to get outdoors and active on our 107 acres of meadows, forests, streams, and wetlands.

Our mission is to provide access to outdoor experience to promote well-being, sustainability and resilient communities. It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we embark on this journey of discovery, learning, and growth together at our Farm and Forest Preschool. At Ketcha Outdoors, we believe in fostering a love of learning in the outdoors to promote a connection to and a respect for the natural environment.

Our Farm and Forest Preschool is a unique educational experience where children can play, learn and connect with their peers while immersed in nature. Children on our program develop a strong sense of curiosity and a connection to the world around them which builds the foundation for a lifelong love of education. Our dedicated team of skilled educators is committed to providing a nurturing environment that encourages safe and fun exploration that is developmentally appropriate for children ages 3-5 years old.

As parents and guardians, your involvement is integral to the success of our preschool community. We encourage open communication and collaboration, and we look forward to building strong partnerships with each family. Together, we can make Ketcha Outdoors Farm and Forest Preschool a place where your child's potential truly blossoms. Thank you for choosing Ketcha Outdoors.

We can't wait to explore, learn, and grow with your little ones!

Sincerely,  
Laragh Kavanaugh  
Executive Director, Ketcha Outdoors

# KETCHA OUTDOORS

# MISSION

To provide equitable access to outdoor experiences and gear, promoting well-being, sustainability, and resilient communities.



# VISION

We envision a Maine community where anyone can enjoy being active outdoors. We believe that access to the outdoors, educational programming, and reliable gear has positive benefits for individuals and communities. We believe that being engaged in nature promotes physical and mental health, builds confidence and resilience, fosters environmental stewardship, and brings diverse communities together.

# VALUES

At Ketcha Outdoors we offer quality programs and events to serve our community. We strive to adhere to our values with each interaction we have with our community, or with an individual.

- We offer a caring and safe place for people to explore the world around them.
- Our organizational culture is one of acceptance and tolerance. Diversity is welcome and encouraged here.
- We challenge kids of all ages through experiential and hands-on programs, feeding their curiosity and discovery of the world.
- We understand the importance of nature and the environment and strive to encourage families to explore the world around them.
- Protection and conservation of our property is of utmost importance, as well as any other environment our programs operate in.

## Organizational Structure

Ketcha Outdoors, formerly known as Camp Ketcha, has been in operation since 1964. We are a charitable non-profit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors.

Our website is <https://ketchaoutdoors.org> and our current board members can be viewed here: [Our Board - Ketcha Outdoors](#).

The name Camp Ketcha now refers to our summer day camp program, while our new name Ketcha Outdoors encompasses the full array of our programs which include After School Care, School Vacation Camps, Farm and Forest Preschool, Adventure Challenge ropes course programs, and the Portland Gear Hub and Bike School. <https://portlandgearhub.org/>

Charitable support in the form of fundraising, grants, and volunteer efforts are essential in helping keep our program fees affordable. We raise additional revenue by renting out our facilities to the public for private events such as weddings.



## Land Acknowledgement

We are honored and fortunate to have the use of 107 acres of land between Scarborough, Maine's seacoast and salt marshes. Our occupancy marks a small moment in time amid the history and future of this treasured place.

While ownership and stewardship of these acres are ascribed to the Ketcha Outdoors organization we acknowledge that this is Wabanaki land. The Wabanaki Confederation of tribes -Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy, and Penobscot- have lived here for at least 13,000 years. We are committed to continuous education as an organization as well as individuals so that we can be respectful and conscious stewards of the land we reside on.

A pdf map of the property: [Libby River Farm Trails](#)

Educational Resources: [Maine Wabanaki Reach](#) and [Native Land Map](#)

Property Information

A trail map is available here: [Libby River Farm Trails](#).

The map is published by the Scarborough Land Trust. Ketcha's property abuts the Land Trust's Libby River Farm preserve which has a public access hiking trail. There is a right of way to the public trail which crosses Ketcha's property. The trailhead is located in the lower parking area of our Ice House on Black Point Rd. just north of our main building.

The Ketcha property is an open campus. In addition to the trail to access the Libby River land preserve the public is permitted to walk, ski or bike on the property at times and in areas where there are no active programs (after 6 on weekdays, anytime on weekends). Dogs must be on leash at all times in all areas including in the preserve and no motorized vehicles are allowed.

# FARM AND FOREST PRESCHOOL

## Philosophy

We practice place-based teaching, rooted in the Reggio Emilia approach, throughout our 107 acres of forest, fields, farm, and waterways. Our students are active in the outdoors year-round and in all types of weather. We know that learning happens best through play, so we schedule many opportunities for both structured and unstructured play throughout the day, allowing our students to immerse themselves in the diverse natural settings on our property. We provide the freedom and support needed for child-led exploration, discovery, imaginative and creative play, risk-taking, problem-solving, socializing, and mindful moments. We believe that all children can learn and can contribute to their community, so we cultivate an inclusive environment that honors the diversity of life in both our human cultures and the natural world.

## Program Information

Our Farm & Forest Program is for students ages 3-5 years old. Students must be 3 years old by their first day of school. We have a 1:6 teacher to student ratio with a maximum program size of 30 students.

## Contact Information

The following table provides you names and contact information for the Farm & Forest Preschool program:

Name	Pronouns	Role	Email
Kailina Mills	she/her	Director of the Farm & Forest Preschool	<a href="mailto:Kmills@ketchaoutdoors.org">Kmills@ketchaoutdoors.org</a>
Trisha Hopper	she/her	Lead Teacher	<a href="mailto:Thopper@ketchaoutdoors.org">Thopper@ketchaoutdoors.org</a>
Forrest Leker	he/him	Assistant Teacher	<a href="mailto:Fleker@ketchaoutdoors.org">Fleker@ketchaoutdoors.org</a>
Kristin Philbrick	she/her	Behavior, Health, and Safety Coordinator & After School Care Coordinator	<a href="mailto:kphilbrick@ketchaoutdoors.org">kphilbrick@ketchaoutdoors.org</a>
Liz Tully	she/her	Director of Operations	<a href="mailto:Ltully@ketchaoutdoors.org">Ltully@ketchaoutdoors.org</a>
Laragh Kavanaugh	she/her	Executive Director	<a href="mailto:Lkavanaugh@ketchaoutdoors.org">Lkavanaugh@ketchaoutdoors.org</a>

[See page 22 for details and photos](#)

## Opportunities for Family Involvement

Families are invited to join us throughout the year at several scheduled events, including:

- Two parent-teacher conferences during the year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring;
- An open house in the Fall; and
- An end of year celebration in the Spring.

We view families as collaborators in their child's development and will create opportunities for families to be part of our community and share their insight into their child's experience and learning.

## Student & Family Participation Policies

### Attendance & Dismissal Policies and Procedures

- **Permission for Picking Up:** For a child to be released to a non-parent or non-guardian we must have documented permission. Parents identify individuals in their registration process and additions can be made by email for adding to the list for approved persons. Ketcha staff will ask for identification until they can easily identify the person picking up and can match them to the correct child. It is important that all adults picking up children from any program have their ID at the ready. If a non-custodial parent has been denied access to a child by a court order, you must submit documentation to that effect, and we will comply with it accordingly.
- **Absences:** Attendance is taken every day at Ketcha Outdoors. If your child will be absent, please call (207) 883-8977 to let us know. For preschool, you can send teachers a message via Brightwheel to confirm an absence. A voice mailbox system is in place for messages when school is closed. Your child may not make up absent days during unregistered days. If your child is unexpectedly absent we will reach out to you to verify their absence. Farm and Forest Preschool uses an app called Brightwheel to take attendance, communicate daily with families, and to share photographs. If we haven't heard from you by 9:00am, we will call home to confirm the absence. Before the start of school, you will receive an invitation to join the app and create an account for your child.
- **Late Pick-Up:** Preschool closes promptly at 12:00pm or 3:30pm depending on your child's enrollment. Any participant picked up after pickup time will be charged a \$10 fee plus \$1 per every minute they are late. Payment is due upon pick-up. At 30 minutes past pickup time we follow Failure to Pick-Up Child procedures. In case of an emergency, please notify us immediately.
- **Failure to Pick-Up Child Procedure:** If the parent/guardian or authorized person(s) fails to pick-up the child at the time of the program's closing, Ketcha will ensure that:
  - The child is supervised at all times.
  - Staff members attempt to contact the parent/guardian or authorized person(s); and
  - A ½ hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to the parent or authorized person(s) have failed, and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child, the staff member will call the Department of Health & Human Services 24-hour Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline at 1-800-452-1999 to seek assistance in caring for the child until an authorized person is able to pick-up the child.
- **Visitor Policy:** At Ketcha Outdoors we ensure policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the children, as well as all employees when we have visitors on site. Ketcha Outdoors welcomes visitors and operates an open-door policy. Limitations may be placed on visitors to protect the safety of children and staff and to avoid any unnecessary disruption. All visitors must check in with a staff member to sign in to the Visitor Log.
- During their visit, visitors will be asked to:
  - Wear a name badge.
  - Leave personal belongings including cell phones in your vehicle or in a locked cabinet.
  - Be accompanied by an employee or remain clearly visible to an employee at all time
  - Check in with an employee before using the bathroom so that staff members can check that there are no children in the bathroom area.
  - Ketcha employees have the right to ask any visitor to leave if they feel they are concerned about the safety of staff or children.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Ketcha Outdoors is run by a small, dedicated staff and many volunteers. If you have an interest in volunteering in some capacity at Ketcha please visit our website for more information.  
<https://ketchaoutdoors.org/volunteer/>



## Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

- **Overview:** Managing 107 acres of woods, waterfronts, and a farm entails many variables and frequently changing conditions throughout the seasons. Daily attention is paid to identify problems that may arise. Planned program activities may be adjusted as needed at any time in order to ensure safety. Two way radios are carried at all times by our staff to ensure quick communication whenever assistance becomes necessary. All staff are trained in CPR/First Aid and are Red Cross Water Safety certified.
- **Health Records:** In order to attend, every child must have a Health History form completed on their Camp Brain account, signed by a parent, and submitted no later than 2 weeks prior to the first session your child is registered for. Information documented on the Health History form must be current. Required health information about your student includes but is not limited to allergy history, medications routinely taken, dietary restrictions, general health history, physical/emotional/mental health history, physician contact information, and immunization records (you may need to obtain this from your child's pediatrician). It is important that you and your physician provide complete information regarding any physical condition or recent illness that may require our attention while your student is at Preschool. Please note that we ask for emotional/mental/behavioral health history so that we can provide the best care possible for your child and to help them be a successful member of our Ketcha community.
- **Immunizations:** At Ketcha Outdoors we do require that all children are vaccinated following the Maine DOE vaccination schedule. Up to date records of these immunizations are required before starting care at Ketcha Outdoors. Required immunizations can be found here:  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/ME%20Immunization%20Requirements%20for%20Schools%209-25-2021.pdf>
- **Medical Exemptions:** The following are medical contraindications for which medical exemptions may be certified by a physician for immunizations.
- **Pertussis vaccine:** 1) fever greater than or equal to 40.5 C (105 F); collapse or shock like state (hypotonic-hyporesponsive episode), or persistent, inconsolable crying lasting three or more hours within 48 hours of receiving a prior dose of pertussis vaccine; 2) seizures occurring within 3 days of receiving a prior dose of pertussis vaccine; 3) encephalopathy within 7 days of administration of a previous dose of pertussis vaccine; 4) anaphylactic reaction to pertussis vaccine or a vaccine constituent; or 5) the student has reached the seventh birthday.
- **Diphtheria or tetanus toxoids:** 1) anaphylactic reaction to diphtheria or tetanus toxoids or a toxoid constituent.
- **Measles or mumps vaccine:** 1) pregnancy; 2) known altered immunodeficiency (hematologic and solid tumors; congenital immunodeficiency; and long-term immunosuppressive therapy); 3) anaphylactic reactions to egg ingestion or to neomycin; 4) anaphylactic reaction to measles or mumps vaccine or a vaccine constituent.
- **Rubella vaccine:** 1) pregnancy; 2) known altered immunodeficiency (hematologic and solid tumors; congenital immunodeficiency; and long-term immunosuppressive therapy); 3) anaphylactic reactions to neomycin; 4) anaphylactic reaction to rubella vaccine or a vaccine constituent.
- **Inactivated polio vaccine:** 1) anaphylactic reactions to neomycin or streptomycin; 2) anaphylactic reaction to polio vaccine or a vaccine constituent.
- **Varicella:** 1) pregnancy; 2) immunosuppression; 3) anaphylactic reaction to a vaccine component ; 4) recent recipient of antibody-containing blood product."



- **Illness and Injury:** If your child is ill, please do not send them to our programs. Illness may look like a fever greater than 100.4 and/or vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours. If your child is experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms not relieved by rest or over the counter medication, please consider having your child tested for the flu, COVID, strep, or other illnesses prior to returning to Ketcha Outdoors. If your child becomes ill while at Ketcha Outdoors, they will be separated from the group with a staff attending to their comfort, and you will be notified to arrange for a pick up. We seek the counsel of parents/guardians whenever a camper is ill, abnormally homesick, or whenever something extraordinary occurs; please do not be alarmed if you receive a call from us. Depending on the illness, other parents/guardians may need to be notified. Certain illnesses have to be reported to the Center for Disease Control and a physician's note may be needed to verify when the child is cleared to return to school.

**Common illnesses require the following precautions:**

- **Fever**- Child may return after being fever free without the use of medication for 24 hours
- **Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea** - Child may return after they are free of symptoms without the use of medication for 24 hours.
- **Chicken pox** - Child may return to care after all the chicken pox have scabbed over.
- **Conjunctivitis** - Can return after treatment has begun and there is no evidence of discharge.
- **Lice** - A child may return after treatment has been administered and are free from all signs of nits and lice. The child will be inspected for lice by Ketcha Outdoors staff before they can return.
- **Strep Throat** - A child may return after being on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.
- **Impetigo** - A child may return after being on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.
- **Rashes** – please check with your pediatrician before sending them to school.
- In case of injury, the Ketcha Outdoors staff and/or Health Officer will take necessary measures to ensure proper emergency care, which may include: treatment by staff for minor injuries, phoning the parent/guardian for instructions, or calling local emergency care providers.
- You will be notified as soon as possible regarding any communicable diseases affecting children in the program. We report outbreaks of disease to local health authorities. Children absent due to contagious diseases can return to Ketcha Outdoors when accompanied by a signed physician's statement indicating they are no longer contagious.
- It is important that you provide us with complete emergency contact information (other than yourself). In the case of any injury that requires medical attention, we make every attempt to contact you prior to treatment. In the event you cannot be reached, we will have your written authorization on file to treat an injury (on the Registration Form).

- **Medications:** Both nonprescription and prescription medications, ointments, and creams can be given to your child as needed. New medications should be administered at home 24 hours before returning to school in case of a reaction. Parents/guardians are required to fill out a medication form and to supply all medications in their original containers. These must be labeled with the child's name and physician. Expired medications will not be dispensed, and medication forms must be updated every six months.
- **Emergency Procedures:** We conduct fire drills once a month and evacuation drills twice a year. In the event of a true emergency you will be contacted immediately after the safety of the children has been secured. EMS will be called first for perceived life threatening injuries, and parents/guardians will be contacted immediately afterward. All staff are trained in American Red Cross First Aid, and Infant, Child, and Adult CPR.
- **Evacuations:** In the event that we need to evacuate the premises due to an emergency or safety concern we have identified two locations to evacuate to. Our in-neighborhood location is the Black Point Fire Department at 341 Black Point Rd, Scarborough, and our out-of-neighborhood location is Highland Farm at 109 Highland Ave, Scarborough. It is only in an emergency situation that we would transport children. Ketcha Outdoors staff are not responsible for transporting children in any other situation.
- **Emergency School Closing:** In the event of an emergency school closing we will notify local media outlets, place a sign out front, post it on the website, and send out a mass email if possible. If we currently do not have an email address for you, please call us at (207) 883-8977 to add your email to the list. If an emergency were to occur while our programs are in session but we do not need to evacuate the premises, we may announce an alternative pick-up location: either our Ice House Building off Black Point Road or our Farm off Spurwink Road.
- **Serious Injury and Death Reporting:** As required by licensing rules, any injury to a child while in the care of Ketcha Outdoors will be reported to their parent/guardian. A written copy of a completed Accident/Illness/Injury Report will be kept in the child's file. Where necessary under law the report will be forwarded to the appropriate governing agency. Parents/guardians and state licensing staff know children are active and no amount of child proofing and supervision can prevent all injuries. However, reporting injuries can help prevent them in the future by identifying injury patterns specific to the child care's environment and/or with a child who may need help with difficulties associated with balance, vision, or foot positioning. Medical attention is a parent/guardian decision. When a parent/guardian cannot be reached, then Ketcha Outdoors will act in their stead when a decision on immediate medical attention is needed. Serious injuries will be reported to the Child Care Licensing Unit at 207-287-9300 within 24 hours.
- **Weapons Policy:** No guns or weapons of any sort are permitted on the premises by staff or visitors unless carried by those engaged in official duties of law enforcement, security, or the military. Possession of a valid concealed weapons permit authorized by the state of Maine is not an exemption under this policy.



- **Student Behaviors:** We recognize and appreciate that young children are still learning to control their bodies and regulate their emotions. As such, we do not punish children when unsafe or unkind behaviors occur. We first work to ensure safety of the child and others, then we help the child regulate their nervous system, and finally we will communicate with the child to help them develop the physical, social, and emotional skills needed to respond better next time. With this process, we aim to meet the child where they are at developmentally and teach them the skills needed to grow. To ensure the safety of all staff and students and to help identify patterns of behavior, all unsafe, unkind, and/or problematic student behaviors are documented by staff when they occur. We use a 3-scale rating system to indicate the seriousness of the behavior and determine next steps, which you can view on the page 17 of this handbook.
- **Accessibility:** Ketcha Outdoors complies with all standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Children with special needs will not be excluded from participation in any activities or programs as long as it does not fundamentally alter the program for the other children. When this becomes a concern, then every effort will be made to accommodate the child with special needs by utilizing additional support staff available through Child Development Services, special education services, or paid for privately by the family.

## Gear and Weather Policies

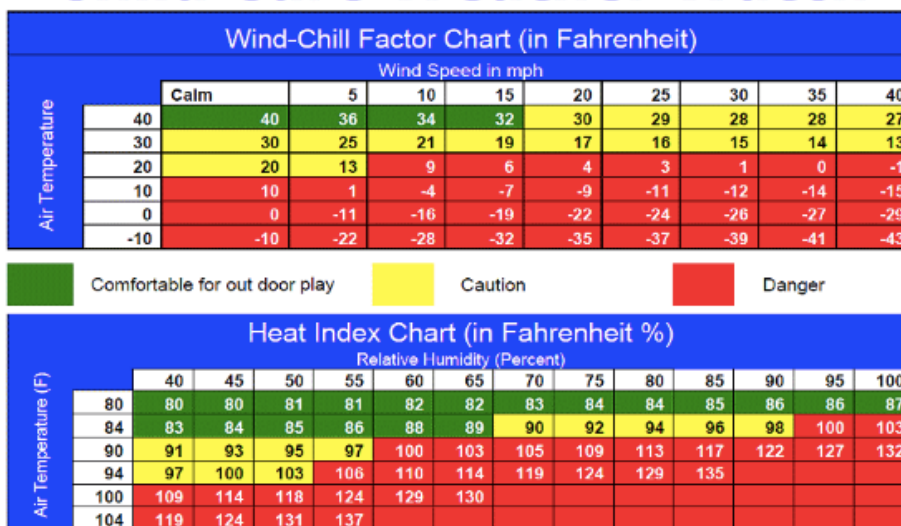
- **Personal Items:** Articles brought to preschool are the responsibility of the student. KETCHA OUTDOORS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN ARTICLES. Please leave valuables at home. Please note that Ketcha Outdoors does not allow drugs or alcohol of any sort on the facility during children's programming.
- Please label as many of their items as you can. A sharpie works wonders, even just initials help a lot. With all the changes we do, their gear gets separated very easily. There are stamps available on-line you can have custom made for easy labeling. Here is a site recommended to us: [Mabel's Labels: Kids Labels, Name Stickers & Clothing Labels](#)
- Please provide us with a full set of clothes to keep on hand. We will keep track of what has been used and let you know when replacements are needed. The set should include a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. In the winter, it should also include an extra set of mittens and a hat.
- **Clothing and Gear:** It is essential to have all the necessary gear and clothing suitable for each day's weather. Please keep an eye on the daily weather reports and teachers will update you to the greatest extent possible.
  - They will need a water bottle that is not too large and heavy that your child can independently open and close. We always refill during the day. If your child does not come with a water bottle, a Ketcha one will be provided for them and you will be billed \$3.00 on your account.
  - Students will need a small, light, preferably Waterproof Backpack to carry their water bottle, snack, layers appropriate to the weather, and other needed items. Other recommended options: I! bean I!bean Osprey Firefly. For those staying in the afternoon, you may want to pack an additional bag if you're transporting rest time items back and forth or additional gear. To minimize what you have to bring back and forth you can leave gear such as rain suits, fleeces and wind layers for us to hold.
  - If you have any difficulty with finding proper gear, please reach out to the director. We have a gear library with many items that you are welcome to borrow for as long as you need. We also accept donations to add to our gear library if you have gear that your child has outgrown.
  - **Please do not have the kids bring any toys from home** unless they're staying for the full day in which case one small stuffed toy is fine for rest time.



## Gear and Weather Policies

- **Seasonal Changes:** We strive to spend as much time outdoors as possible, in the winter months we have to adjust a bit based on the cold. We use the Child Care Weather Watch chart to ensure conditions are safe to spend time outside. Sometimes we will eat snack/lunch inside and have indoor time. If we ever need to start indoors due to extreme weather we will send notice in the morning over Brightwheel.
- We do not send children outdoors in:
  - Wooded areas when wind speeds are over 20 mph
  - Thunder or lightening
  - Danger zone on the weather watch chart

### Child Care Weather Watch



- **Rain Gear:**
  - Waterproof Jacket and pants or Rain Suit
  - Rain boots need to be fully waterproof and please make sure they fit comfortably.
  
- **Mild Weather Clothing:** Lightweight cotton shirts, pants, and shorts are fine for mild weather. Quick dry synthetic materials are preferred over denim or other thick cotton. Even on sunny, dry days they're likely to get wet with water play or puddles, and synthetic materials will dry out quickly.
  - In the warm to cool weather months the following are needed:
    - Sun hat - full brim with a string or chin fastener preferred
    - Sneakers or sturdy close-toed shoes \*no laces please!\*
    - Wind jacket/ Warm jacket as needed



**Cold Weather** : Once the weather turns cold we put away all our cotton and layer up. The more flexibility we have for layering up and down as needed the better.

- Why not cotton? The issue with cotton is that it holds moisture, making it ineffective for staying warm and dry. And a note on long underwear, it need not be expensive or specialized. Snug fitting, non cotton pajamas are perfect.

### Here's our Winter List

- Base layer - non-cotton long underwear, top and bottom (use PJs!)
- Mid layer top- fleece jacket or wool sweater/shirt, no cotton sweatshirts
- Mid layer bottom – fleece/wool pants or thick synthetic PJ bottoms
- Warm socks - non-cotton
- Snow boots - sturdy, waterproof or at least very resistant
- Snowsuit/snow pants - either a 2 piece or one piece is fine
- Balaclava or neck gaiter
- Gloves/Mittens - water resistant, 2 pairs each day is best for when they get wet
- Glove or mitten liners - snug, stretchy knit type, 2 pairs is best
- Hats - we recommend a nylon shell aviator style (ear flaps and chin fasteners rock!)



### Sunscreen and Bug Spray

- Apply sunscreen and bug spray each morning before drop off. This includes cloudy days, and even in the winter we recommend a bit of sunscreen on their faces. If there is a specific bug spray or sunscreen you prefer to use, please give them to a staff member; we will label it and hold on to them. Bug spray and sunscreen should never be stored in children's backpacks. Sunscreen and bug spray are considered a medication, and we will only administer it if a parent/guardian has signed the appropriate permission form.



### Overview

- Staff will actively supervise every child on an individualized level of care within reasonable accommodation. We cannot provide constant 1:1 support.
- We do not have physical barriers or fences; therefore, elopement is a bigger challenge than in most other settings. Children MUST be able to stay with their group, follow teacher direction, and stay within stated boundaries.
- Documentation of all incidents and accidents during program hours will be signed off on by a parent.
- If a child's behavior becomes routinely disruptive to the experience of the other children (more than three acts of aggression in a day), the parents may be called to pick up the child for the remainder of the day. A parent or guardian meeting will be requested to create an individualized behavior plan for the child. Acts of physical aggression include biting, kicking, pushing, hitting, punching, or spitting on other children or staff.

### Behavior Support Plan Process

- When a behavior support plan is created, it will be individualized to fit the unique needs of the child. A family meeting will be held so that parents and staff can collaborate on the creation of the plan.
- A month after the individualized support plan is created, a second parent meeting will be scheduled to assess the efficacy of the plan, address the child's needs, and determine whether or not other services are recommended. These services may include: ECCP (Early Childhood Consultation Partnership), Help Me Grow Maine, and/or Child Developmental Services.
- After the second month of implementing the individualized support plan, a third parent meeting will be held to assess the efficacy of the plan, adapt or modify the plan as needed to best support the student, and consider whether Ketcha Outdoors can reasonably accommodate their needs.
- If it is decided that Ketcha Outdoors cannot reasonably accommodate the child's support needs, the family may be asked to withdraw the child from the program. A transition meeting will be held to support the family in finding other placement options for the child.

### Risky Play

- Our teachers are trained in monitoring risky play, teaching children to be aware of their body, and what is happening around them. We will guide them through risky situations such as climbing logs, boulders, trees, and navigating rough terrain.
  - Benefits and risks of tree climbing on child development and resiliency.



## State of Maine Childcare Licensing

- Our school year programs operate as a licensed child care program through the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. We are licensed for up to 95 children. All rules and regulations applicable to our child care license can be found at [https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/10-148%20Ch.%2032%20Child%20Care%20Facility%20Licensing%20Rule%20Effective%2009-27-21\\_jpf%20edits.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/10-148%20Ch.%2032%20Child%20Care%20Facility%20Licensing%20Rule%20Effective%2009-27-21_jpf%20edits.pdf)

### Rights of Children

#### **Children receiving care from Child Care Facilities have the following rights:**

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or 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 Child care services without discrimination 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 Child Care Facility.
  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 Child Care Facility.
  7. Each Child has the right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
  8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.
- To report concerns about a child care provider, including licensing violations or concerns regarding suspected abuse or neglect in a child care setting call 1-800-452-1999 (deaf and hard of hearing individuals should dial 711 for the Maine Relay). Intake caseworkers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including weekends and holidays. Reports of concerns with child care providers can be made confidentially or anonymously.

### Mandated Reporting

- Our staff are all required to complete a certification in child protection awareness, instructing them on recognition of suspected abuse and neglect. In accordance with the State of Maine's Child Care Licensing Rules: Any Child Care Staff Member suspecting abuse and/or neglect must immediately report this information to Child Protective Intake, 1-800-452-1999, TTY 1-800-963-9490 which is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### Child Development Services

- The Child Development Services system is available for consultations and evaluations whenever there are questions or concerns about development. CDS operates under the supervision of the Maine Department of Education.
- Screenings and evaluations are provided in order to identify children who are eligible for services. Regional CDS sites arrange for local services that include early intervention and special education and related services for eligible children from birth to age five and their families.

### Referrals can be submitted by:

- Online: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/cds/referrals>
- By phone 877-770-8883
- By fax to 207-624-6661. You must include the Child Find Intake Form, PDF available on-line.

**Maine’s Early Learning and Development Standards**

We follow the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS), which draw on current research and practice in early childhood education. The MELDS guide us as we support students to develop skills and knowledge in their preschool years that lay the foundation for success in Kindergarten and beyond. The MELDS include standards in Social & Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Creative Arts, Early Language and Literacy, Reading Standards for Literature, Physical Development and Health, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Read the standards: [Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards](#)

**Daily Schedule**

We offer a customizable schedule for our preschool. All students enrolled in the Farm & Forest preschool must attend Monday-Thursday mornings. You can also add-on afternoon sessions from Monday-Thursday and/or a Friday full-day session. In order to register for an afternoon or Friday session, you must be signed up for Monday-Thursday mornings. Morning sessions run from 8:00-12:00, and the afternoon sessions add 12:00-3:30. Friday sessions begin at 9:00am to give us time for a weekly staff meeting.

20234/25 School Year	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Morning Session	8:00 am to 12:00 pm	8:00 am to 12:00 pm	8:00 am to 12:00 pm	8:00 am to 12:00 pm	9:00am to 3:30pm
Afternoon Session	12:00pm to 3:30pm	12:00pm to 3:30pm	12:00pm to 3:30pm	12:00pm to 3:30pm	ONLY FULL DAY SESSIONS AVAILABLE

Morning Session	Activity
8:00-8:30	Drop off
8:00-8:45	Free play
8:45-9:15	Morning Circle
9:15-9:45	Project Time
9:45-10:15	Snack
10:15-11:30	Adventure Time
11:30-12:00	Closing Circle & Story

Afternoon Session	
12:00-12:30	Free Play
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Rest Time
2:00-3:00	Free Play

## Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education began in Reggio Emilia, Italy in the 1940s. It is used by all of the municipal schools there, and the approach has been so successful that it has spread worldwide. It is regarded as a best practice in early childhood education. This approach has four core principles:

1. The **“100 Languages of Children.”** The Hundred Languages of Children is a pedagogical strategy for the construction of concepts and the consolidation of understanding. Reggio teachers recognize that children express themselves in a variety of ways – through verbal communication, writing, art, play, and more. The Hundred Languages are described as being expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, ethical, metaphorical, logical, imaginative, and relational. These “100 Languages” are cultivated actively by Reggio teachers, and students are given free access to a range of materials to help express themselves, demonstrate their thinking, and externalize their inner world.
2. The environment (classroom and outdoors) is the “third teacher.” Reggio teachers carefully design, arrange, and construct the learning environment to support exploration, intellectual and physical growth, creativity, and emotional regulation.
3. Rich documentation and reflection. Reggio teachers use audio recordings, photos, videos, and written notes to document student learning throughout the day. Teachers then use this documentation to reflect on what’s happening in the classroom, including what the child is thinking, processing, and learning, and the teacher’s own professional practice. This helps teachers in planning how to support children in their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development in the coming days.
4. Emergent curriculum. The Reggio Emilia approach pioneered the concept of emergent curriculum. In an emergent curriculum, the topic of study emerges from the interests of the children. All academic and social-emotional content that needs to be taught is then adapted and implemented thematically within the umbrella of this topic. This ensures the students are excited about and engaged in their learning at school. When the content of study is meaningful to students, their learning is deeper.

If you’re interested in learning more about the Reggio Emilia approach, we recommend reading these two books:

- *“Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education -- 2nd Edition”* by Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini, and George Forman
- *“Bringing Reggio Emilia Home: An Innovative Approach to Early Childhood Education (Early Childhood Education Series)”* by Louise Boyd Cadwell

## Social Emotional Learning

We have three rules for preschool: Be safe. Be gentle. Be kind. These rules are a positive support approach to help students with skill building for self-control and self-advocacy.

We strive to create a supportive, nurturing and joyful environment where everyone shares a sense of belonging and acceptance. Our goals are to support confidence, strengthen self-awareness, and build social skills.

We support young learners as they learn social skills such as sharing, taking turns, self-advocating, conflict resolution, and showing respect for one another. We help students develop emotional regulation skills such as naming emotions, problem-solving, perseverance, and using tools to self-regulate.

We support the development of these skills with activities like mindful moments, sensory play, show-and-tell, and read aloud, through direct instruction during group activities and lessons, and through individualized coaching during one-on-one or small group interactions.

## Developmental Support

Ketcha Outdoors's philosophy is to help each child develop respect for oneself, others, and the environment, and our goal is to help all children who attend Ketcha Outdoors to be successful in our program. We strive to teach children how to get along with adults and other children, behave in a respectful way towards others and the environment, and in turn gain social emotional skills such as self control and self regulation.

Redirection and positive language are at the forefront of our developmental support strategy. If teachers or staff members witness unsafe/unkind behavior, they will redirect that child to make a different choice. This involves teachers getting down on their level and speaking directly to the child in a gentle way offering suggestions for an alternate choice.

If the situation has involved another child, staff will help guide a conversation directly between the two children using a method called W.O.W. This starts with asking the children to both have a turn in sharing "*What happened?*", then Own their part in it (*I.E. I hit my friend with a stick*), and end the conversation with "*What do we do next time?*" so they have a plan for what to do the next time a situation like that arises. We also ask that kids check on each other if one was hurt in the incident, but do not require them to say sorry. If children are forced to say sorry when they don't feel it, they may learn that saying sorry will resolve all conflicts instead of developing critical conflict management skills. The goal is to set kids up with the skills they need so they can resolve conflicts on their own in time.

If a child is struggling with regaining self control and self regulation, staff will work with that child to problem solve and find out what the child needs at that moment which could include taking a break. Each child is different, some may need to get some space from friends and talk about the situation, others may need a quiet space to look at books, or a space of their own to get some energy out climbing, running, or other physical excursion. Staff and children will always work together to do our best to meet that child's needs before continuing with regular programming.

Ketcha Outdoors provides a safe place for children to express and explore their own emotions as well as those of the children around them. We strive to help children develop their social-emotional skills and become emotionally resilient. Staff do this by modeling appropriate ways to express and work through feelings, guiding them through these processes, and supporting them in labeling and identifying their emotions.

## Individualized Support Planning

Ketcha Outdoors views discipline as the positive use of guidance and language that will teach children the appropriate responses to sometimes challenging situations. We believe that discipline is not punishment, but using experiences to teach, guide, and redirect children for the purpose of raising responsible, resilient, and confident children who will grow up to care for themselves and others.

We strive to create an open, trusting relationship with parents that welcomes communication between parents and staff regarding their child's experiences at Ketcha Outdoors. If a child's behavior is interfering negatively with the functioning of the program or the safety of others, we will notify the parent or guardian to set up a meeting with the director, health and behavior coordinator, and lead teacher. Staff will work cooperatively with families to develop and implement strategies to provide extra support by creating a behavior support plan.

## Pricing & Tuition Policies

### Payments

Tuition is due by the first of the month for the next month and paid through required automatic payments in our Camp Brain registration system. For example, October payments are due by September 1.

### Late Fees

If your automatic payment is declined and corrective action is not made by a reasonable date a late fee of \$25 will be assessed. A camper may be asked to leave the program if payment is not up to date. We accept cash, check or Mastercard or Visa.

### Vacation Policy

If families take vacation outside of the Farm & Forest School scheduled vacations, you are still responsible for full tuition.

### Refund/Cancellation/Schedule Change Policy

Cancellations and schedule changes received one month prior to the start of the session (first of the month) will receive a refund of the balance of their tuition minus a \$50 cancellation fee. Registration deposits (\$50 per session) and registration fees (\$20 per year) are non-refundable and non-transferable. All cancellation notices must be in writing or they are otherwise void.

Ketcha Outdoors does not refund tuition for cancellations resulting from missed buses, forgotten registrations, incorrect scheduling by the parent, family vacations, minor illnesses, or behavior problems. "No shows" are not eligible for refunds. Medical Emergency Cancellation for severe medical issues/illnesses will need a note provided by a doctor and are assessed on a case by case basis by our leadership team.

### Preschool Monthly Pricing:

**Monday-Thursday Mornings 8:00-12:00 - \$695**

**Monday-Thursday Afternoons 12:00-3:30 - \$125 (per afternoon)**

**Friday full-day sessions 9:00-3:30 - \$315**

### Termination of Service

We reserve the right to terminate service for the following reasons:

- Failure to pay tuition or complete the required forms and documentation on time;
- Lack of parental cooperation in regards to behavior and safety concerns;
- Failure of child to adjust to the school after a reasonable amount of time;
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property;
- Physical abuse or verbal threats or harassment by a parent/guardian towards Ketcha staff;
- Failure to comply with the policies set forth in the Farm & Forest Preschool Family Handbook;
- If a child's behavior threatens the well-being of anyone at the center;
- Possession or use of weapons on the premises;
- If a situation arises where parental expectations and the child's needs cannot reasonably be met by Ketcha Outdoors staff after a period of negotiation; or
- Any other reason as deemed necessary by the Ketcha Outdoors leadership staff.

**TERMINATION NOTIFICATION:** Leadership will advise families in writing that their child's enrollment will be terminated following all attempts to rectify any non-compliance.



## Farm & Forest Preschool Academic Calendar 2024-2025

### September

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30				

### October

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

### November

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
				1
				8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

### December

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

### January

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

### February

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

### March

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

### April

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30		

### May

Mon	Tue	Wed	Th	Fri
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

- First Day of School
- No School, No After Care
- Staff Professional Development Day, No School or After Care
- No School; Vacation Camp available for students ages 4+ (online registration required)
- Last Day of School

Note: This schedule is subject to change upon the release of the Scarborough School District 2024-2025 Academic Calendar. A final schedule will be shared with enrolled families before the start of the school year.

**Farm and Forest Preschool**  
Potentially Hazardous Activities Wavier

- I hereby grant permission for my child, \_\_\_\_\_ to engage in the following potentially hazardous activities while in the care of Ketcha Outdoors After School Care:
  - Participate in water activities nearby the Ketcha Outdoors Pond
  - Participate in tree and boulder climbing
  - Use of the inflatable Ketcha Outdoors waterslide or bouncy house
  - Exposure to elements through all seasons with proper gear
  - Walking on uneven surfaces on and off trails around property
  
- All Ketcha Outdoors Childcare staff have taken the Red Cross Water Safety Class for Parents & Caregivers, have been trained in Ketcha Outdoors Waterfront Safety and are CPR/First Aid certified.
  
- This parental/guardian permission form must be updated, signed and dated by the parent or legal guardian at least annually.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Signature**

**Farm & Forest Preschool Handbook Acknowledgement**

**I have read and agree to the terms and conditions in the Ketcha Outdoors Farm & Forest Preschool 2024-2025 Family Handbook**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



**LARAGH KAVANAUGH**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Lkavanaugh@ketchaoutdoors.org



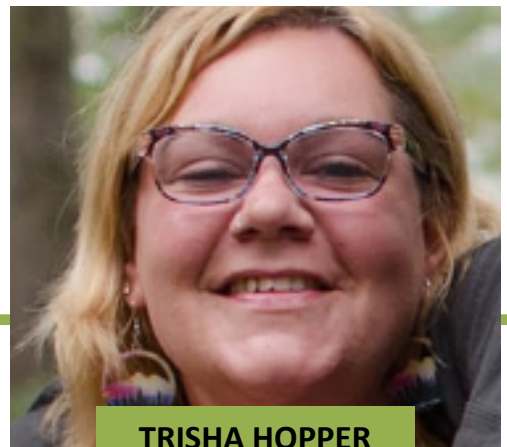
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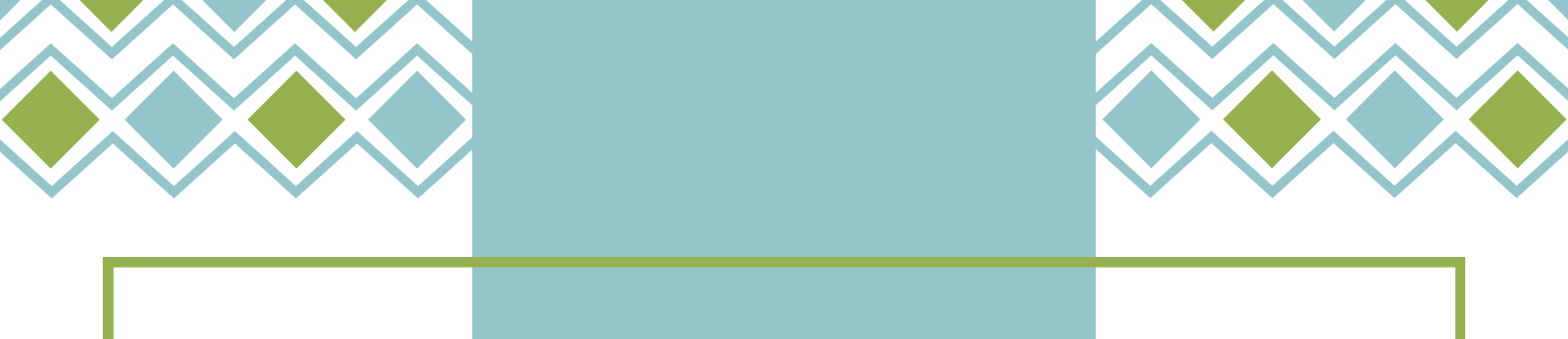
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LET'S

**GROW**

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