



## Welcome to Heartberry Playschool (PS)!

Our mission for Heartberry PS is to provide a safe environment for your little one to engage in place-based learning while interacting with their peers, along with individualized adult instruction.

## Member Commitment & Responsibilities

As a member of the playschool pod we ask each family to commit to the **cooperative model** with a **minimum 6 month** commitment. The pod is only as strong as its members and each member has different childcare needs. Our goal is to create a routine with a committed time each week for the playschool to meet. If you are going to miss a day, please notify the **pod leader** in advance so that we can adjust the schedule as needed. Note that we budget the hours / fee based on the number of kids attending the sessions.

The parent volunteer position will rotate with each class. Alternatively, if desired a pod can appoint a parent to be the primary parent-assistant in exchange for a tuition discount. If rotating, we strive to maintain a one to two month regular rotation so parents can plan for their days at the playschool. The rotation will depend on how many families and days the playschool operates for the pod. As long as prior arrangements are made, a parent may substitute another childcare representative to act as a parent volunteer as long as they are able to hold the space and abide by the same expectations, including completing a background check prior to filling in. Please consult us if you are likely to send someone else to fulfill your volunteer hours, or need help on finding someone.

Payment will be due for the upcoming **month** at the first playschool day of the month, regardless of whether the child will be able to attend every session. A family may also choose to pay up front for the entire quarter.

At least one parent/caregiver from the family is also responsible for attending our meetings (quarterly or as needed) that we will host at a time and location that is as accessible for everyone to the best of our capabilities. With our parent-cooperative model, it is important for us to hear from each family regarding their values and if the playschool is meeting their needs. We will also have a call out for occasional work parties in which we appreciate anyone who could volunteer a couple of hours to set up anything that we have identified a need.

## General Playschool Flow & Items Needed for Child

Currently, we have one pod operating with a maximum of 8 kids from **9 am - 1 pm on Tuesday and Friday** at ShyAcre Farm, 363 Discovery Rd. Port Townsend.

If families wish, they may stay for the first and last 30 minutes of playschool. This will help the children flourish in the playschool environment and ease transitions. If you need to pick up your child early or drop off late, that is not encouraged but permitted.

Children will have a group snack and beverage time around 10 am and eat lunch around 11:45 pm; please bring lunch, drink and water bottle. Snacks are currently provided by parents on a rotational basis. Please let the teacher and pod leader know if there are any dietary restrictions or allergies.

Each family is responsible for bringing a labeled bag with diapers (if not potty trained), wipes and a change of clothes. Other essential items like rain gear, jackets, hats and sunscreen are also recommended.

The teacher is responsible for bringing materials and anything related to specific activities. The school will provide cleaning supplies, an assortment of toys and other play items, and backup basic items like wipes and diapers.

Please refrain from bringing personal toys and/or items that might create unnecessary conflict between toddlers. If bringing a toy or food item to play school, it must be cleared in advance with the teacher and enough must be brought for sharing. The teacher may call and request that a parent come to pick up a personal item that is brought without permission, or a child who is causing an unmanageable disruption.

Please keep your child home if they or any immediate household member is not feeling well/sick and has the capability of spreading the illness.

### ***Right to Withdraw***

*The goal of Heartberry Cooperative Playschool is to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for toddlers. Heartberry PS retains the right to withdraw a child at any time when in the best interest of the child and/or playschool. We reserve the right to require the withdrawal of a child either on a temporary or permanent basis if:*

*\* The child's behavior endangers the physical or mental health of the other children*

*\* The teacher decides it is necessary for reasons regarding behavior, emotional disturbances, health, adjustment, and/or if she determines the child's educational/personal needs cannot be met by my school*

*\* Tuition is repeatedly late or unpaid*

*\* The parent/caregivers fail to abide by Heartberry's values, policies and procedures (as indicated in Parent Handbook).*

*\* In the event a child is withdrawn from or asked to leave Heartberry, no part of the tuition paid for the month and/or deposits paid will be refunded.*

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*Signature/date*



**Heartberry**  
Playschool

## Parent Handbook

# Parent Handbook

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# Together We Create!

## About Heartberry Playschool

We create a community where children and families can thrive.

Heartberry Playschool (Heartberry PS) is an outdoor farm-and play-based school for toddlers (ages 2.5 to 5 years old).

We are a **cooperative** of families who through a **spirit of mutual helpfulness** create 'pods' of early learning and care.

A pod creates a small, close-knit group of families (up to 8 ). The pods are made up of caring adults (parents, caregivers, teachers, and Elderberries) who work together to support child care and learning needs of the group through a shared commitment to

### Heartberry PS Core Values:

-  **Curiosity**
-  **Friendship**
-  **Kindness**
-  **Openness**

In pods, children build their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive capabilities through play. Through play children spark their curiosity and expand their sense of wonder and imagination; learn with and from each other, adults, elders, plants, and nature; and grow in their own agency.

Part of what makes Heartberry PS unique is the intergenerational partnership with **YOU - the Parent helper!**

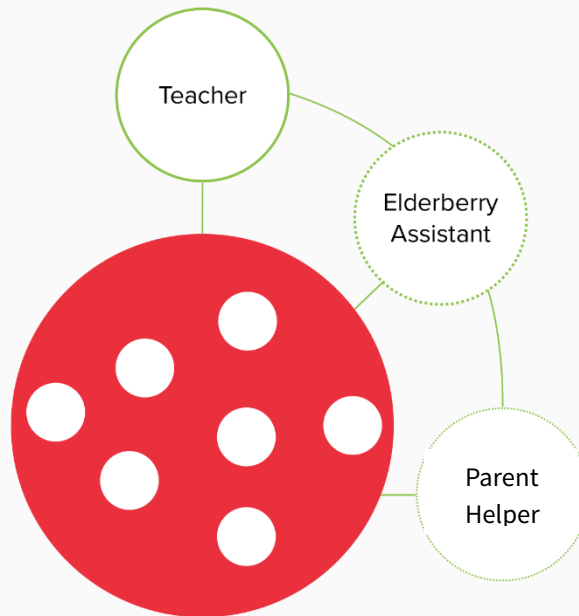
The parent involvement is key in making the cooperative remain affordable and comply as a cooperative childcare model. As a Parent helper, you also get to know and care for the other amazing kids in the pod and also experience the class.

We believe (and know) that it takes a village to raise a child (and be a parent). We have much to learn from each other. Thank you for being a part of the Heartberry PS community of care.

# Together We Give!

## Roles & Responsibilities

### Playschool Care & Learning Team



Heartberry Playschool is unique in that each pod is run by the families themselves. It is not an “*open-your-car-door-drop-your-kid-off*” school. Parents/caregivers serve as active participants in their child’s care and learning from overseeing pod operations and communications to working in the classroom on a rotating basis. This sharing and work-trade-like commitment keeps Playschool costs more affordable while fostering a sense of community of play-based learners (old and young).

While this works great for some families, Heartberry PS recognizes the classroom participation requirement is a barrier for others. We strive to keep the cooperative open and accessible to as many families as possible.

The **Elderberry Patch** is a program to support parents and their toddler-aged children. As an Elderberry, you get matched with one of the Heartberry pods. Your commitment allows parents to feel supported and gain a sense of normalcy and children to grow in the care of the community through healthy peer and adult relationships.

We are in the middle of working out a pilot program for this program and will keep you informed as we further the process.



## Responsibilities

### Parent Classroom Helper

**Commitment:** 1 or 2 days a month; Tuesdays and/or Friday, 8:45 am-1:15 pm

The Classroom Helper works alongside the teacher to provide the best possible environment for all children to play, grow and learn together. A distinction of this role is that the Classroom Helper provides more small group support and is a 'runner' for the class. This role requires the ability to move fast/ be physically able to be with the 'free range' children while outside. This role can be physically demanding at times, as our toddlers are active and our play area is expansive.

- **Provide** snacks (and hot beverages in the winter months) to share for the whole group for 10am snack time. Easy favorites include popcorn, fruits, muffins, tea with honey.
- Be **proactive** assistant to the Teacher (e.g. Teacher is leading the group and not able to deal with a child running out of the Greenhouse, the Helper shall step in and help the child)
- **Be second in command and participate in Classroom activities.** During outdoor activities be ready to skip, walk, dig, and be messy.
- **Provide** 1:1 support/attention to children, allowing the teacher to manage the safety and care of the group.
- **Facilitate** potty breaks and help children (this may include diaper changes, helping with clean-up, etc.)
- **Arrive 5 minutes** before class starts to help the teacher set up.
- Plan to **stay** another **15 minutes** at the end to sweep, wash brushes, tidy up the room and have a brief reflection with the Teacher about the day.

### **Successful Participation of both Elderberry Classroom Assist and Parent Patchwork**

- Arrive 15 minutes before class to help the teacher set up and discuss the day's activities
- Allow the teacher to remain with the children. If preparation needs to be done (e.g. snacks or setting up an activity), do it for the teacher so they can remain with the children.
- Clean up the classroom. This includes putting away toys, wiping off tables, and cleaning supplies.
- Remain with the children until the end of class until parents have picked them up
- Stay at least 15 minutes after class to help clean up and debrief with the teacher, reflecting on how the day went so they know if they would like participation to be done differently the next time you are in the classroom
- Find replacement if you cannot participate on your assigned day, inform the [teacher] of the change
- Sit whenever you can. Get down to the child's level and interact with the children
- Be alert to the entire classroom and move to the area where you are most needed

### **Parent Assist – Teacher Relationships**

- **Effective** communication and conflict resolution is key to this partnership.
- Teacher provides leadership and direction in the classroom and is responsible for sharing the plans for the day's program, discussing group and individual goals, and assigning tasks.
- Accept the teacher's guidance and direction. Any concerns or questions that arise must be discussed and acted on in a timely manner, and at an appropriate time (e.g. ask questions to clarify when something is not clear; discuss concerns, offer ideas and suggestions after school to your appointed pod point person)
- Two-way communication with the Classroom teacher and individual parents is important to prevent major conflicts from developing.
- Positive, open, and respectful communication, as outlined in the Heartberry Communication Guidelines section of our Hand is vital.
- The teacher is a valuable resource.
- The parent is a valuable resource.
- The Elderberry is a valuable resource.

Personal conflicts that arise at school can be addressed and resolved with the help of the Heartberry Communication Guidelines (below) and/or speaking with our school director.





## PARENT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

**Child's Name(s)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Pod Leader Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Heartberry Playschool is a **cooperative** of families who through a **spirit of mutual helpfulness** (in service to one another) create 'pods' of early learning and care. Parent/guardian involvement is central to keeping playschool costs as low as possible.

Parental commitment within a Heartberry Playschool pod relies on your spirit of giving in three keyways:

1. A financial commitment

- Parents accept responsibility for the cost of tuition for the year, as stated in the Enrollment Contract.

2. A work-trade commitment

- Parents accept responsibility to serve as a **Classroom Helper**, on a rotating basis, to assist the teacher, as stated in the Classroom Helper Contract. **4.5 hours/class**
- Parents accept the responsibility to cover other work-trade agreements that the pod agrees to (e.g. providing snacks, with land or classroom space partners) in order to further lower pod costs.

3. A pod-community commitment

- Parents accept the responsibility to be accountable to their pod by participating in monthly parent-family pod meetings.
- Parents accept the responsibility for building an open, transparent, inclusive, and fun pod environment by working together to support the good of the community, the pod.

Playschool family time commitment is estimated at **XX hours/month**

We realize that time constraints can limit your availability for the work-trade commitment of being a Classroom Helper. We offer the option of “buying out your time.” **Each hour of your time in the classroom is worth \$25.** You can fulfill your Classroom Helper commitment in hours, money, or a combination of both.

Your classroom hours can be fulfilled by you, grandparents, other family members, or Elderberry (learn more about this option from Heartberry PS). Other members must complete the required background check and other volunteer forms before filling in.

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I agree to fulfill my service commitment of \_\_\_\_ hours as Classroom Helper and other duties defined in this document during the playschool year or pay \$25/hour for each hour not worked. I understand that I will be billed for the balance owned at the end of the month.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_