



## CATOCTIN SUN NATURE PRESCHOOL

**WELCOME! We are so happy to have you join our wonderful, nature-based, educational community!**

Education and administration of early learning on the heels of a pandemic paints a colorful picture for us all, as we prepare for another year (our 12<sup>th</sup>!) of early learning and fresh air at Catoctin Sun. We are excited to walk with you along this important educational journey, one based on Harvard brain-based research teachings (Multiple Intelligence Theory by Howard Gardner), and activities “scaffolded” in the style of Lev Vygotsky and other developmental theorists. The philosophy of our program is inspired by *The Hundred Languages of Children*, by Reggio Emilia founders and teachers. The Project Approach model, along with Math Their Way, and Montessori-inspired classroom centers at Catoctin Sun are lovingly designed and complemented by our rich language approach. Parents who spend time in and around the classroom on a daily or weekly basis will find teachers trained to cultivate both receptive and expressive communication. We look to nurture your child's developmental growth and meet them at their own unique ages and stages. Teachers differentiate activities according to your child's own “Hundred Languages” - creative ways they choose to express themselves.

Catoctin Sun is proud of our reputation as an amiable, warm, nurturing place! Thank you for choosing us as your child's early learning educators - ones that are fully dedicated to providing an environment that is safe and healthy while nurturing your child's social-emotional growth and advocating for their health and well-being. This includes guidance driven by evolving COVID transmission rates via the Frederick County Health Department, requirements and trainings along with MSDE regulations, and input from the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Regular parental communication is a crucial part of a well-organized school year. Our small classroom size of 15 children (per day) offers in-person availability daily. Additionally, in mid-August you will receive a private Parent Facebook Page link. \*If you do not receive a link, please text Ms. Natalie on our school cell to join the group at that time. It will be your online source of classroom updates, photos, and files.

Catoctin Sun also offers a Parent Handbook for valuable information in planning your child's year. You can request your electronic copy prior to the start of your child's school year or find it under “FILES” near the top of our private parent Facebook page.

We are grateful for your partnering with us as we work together to offer a safe, nurturing, learning environment for children. I've said it before, and I'll say it again...Cat Sun families are the BEST community of parents, kids & educators. And we are happy to have you with us!

## LEARNING PODS at CATOCTIN SUN

POD-STYLE LEARNING in the Reggio Emilia-style classroom aligns with Reggio's mixed-age classroom philosophy. The children make activity choices in both indoor and outdoor spaces; additionally, teachers help facilitate an organic "emergent" learning environment with activities based on age, student : teacher ratio, and other developmental factors.



A limited number of spots are available (per age grouping, or "pod") to instill balance in daily learning blocks and group interaction. Classroom materials, activities, and play environments are differentiated by developmental age & stage. Both indoor and outdoor classrooms are viewed as an important, natural aesthetic. In the Reggio World, we say "Environment is the third teacher." Our school differentiates activities per pod age group and per individual learning style. There is no "one way" to teach! As one of our favorite school mottos states, "There's more than one way to learn—and more than one way to be smart."

## HOW TO REACH US: COMMUNICATION at CATOCTIN SUN NATURE PRESCHOOL

### Facebook Page – photos & updated communications

Currently, our Cat Sun families belong to a separate, private parent Facebook page for classroom updates, photos, and files. Please text Ms. Natalie for your link to join. Additionally, feel free to message Founder/ Head of School and Co-Atelierista, Ms. Natalie at the school cell: 240-457-3143.

### Email Correspondence

Please send paperwork to [catoctinsunpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:catoctinsunpreschool@gmail.com). You can confirm transmission of any sent email by texting the school cell at (240) 457-3143.

### Summertime Hours & Return Correspondence

We are out of the office for the summer (June-mid August)! You may experience a delay in return correspondence during these summer months. Teaching staff & administration are back in the classroom and office by approximately mid-late August. You are welcome to reach out & follow up via text should you have a pressing need.



**Thank you, friends!**

Thank you for being part of our wonderful little preschool community! We look forward to growing with your child this coming year at Catoctin Sun. 2024-25 brings nominally increased tuition as a means to continue our high-quality programming and pay a healthy living wage to our beloved teachers and staff. We also realize that due to rising costs and the state of our country's current inflation, even small increases in tuition can be a hardship for some families in need, so we invite our families to reach out to about flexible payment plans.

#### **COOPERATIVE / ALT-TUITION**

Available for a limited number of families is a small cooperative scholarship (discount) in exchange for garden tending and/or other outdoor classroom/playground support. This limited offer is currently open for 2 families who can prove financial need and are willing to sign an additional, cooperative agreement. This is open to new, as well as returning families.

Please see Ms. Natalie if you would like to discuss tuition for the upcoming 2024-25 school year. We want you with us!

**Warm Regards & Appreciation,**

***Natalie Hansen Post***

Owner, Head of School, and Co-Teacher/Pedagogista

Catoctin Sun Nature Preschool & Kindergarten, LLC

School Cell: 240-457-3143

## Catoctin Sun Nature Preschool & Pre-Kindergarten

### Program Offerings & Tuition

#### PRESCHOOL FOR YOUNG 3's – LITTLE ACORNS POD

For children in our Little Acorns pod, preschool is a social-personal call! It is their first experience in a preschool group dynamic. We practice following a routine, self-help skills, and stretch our expressive & receptive language. This pod engages in play-based "Project Approach" and emergent learning. Over the course of the school year, we introduce pre-literacy skills through nature, nursery rhyme cadence, songs and beginning recognition of the first letter/s of their name. Little Acorns practice hands-on math art, math play, plus science exploration. Teachers engage children by modeling interactions and turn-taking in a warm, nurturing way.

- **LITTLE ACORNS POD – T TH** (33 mos - young 3's): 9:15-1:30 (\$/98/wk; \$399/mo)  
\*limited availability\*
- **LITTLE ACORNS POD – T TH:** 9:15-3:00 (\$117/wk; \$468/mo)

#### PRESCHOOL for 3 ½ - 5 year olds – SUNFLOWERS POD & NATURE PRE-K

Children in these pods participate in a project approach/emergent style of hands-on curriculum, inspired by the philosophies in *The Hundred Languages of Children*, a primer written by Reggio founders. This pod will focus on building wonder through play as learning, via multiple developmental domains while exploring the natural world - including pre-literacy, mathematical/cognitive & scientific reasoning skills.

"KWL" (What Do We Know, What Do We Want to Know, and What Did We Learn) charts will be used to facilitate cumulative learning in child-led/teacher-guided themes. Problem-solving, expressive & receptive communication skills are of focus, as are the virtues of kindness and compassion toward self, nature. Emergent learning is part of our day, especially as the seasons evolve! Nature Pre-K pods dive a little deeper into pre-K skills through play and differentiated 1:1 activities.

- **SUNFLOWER POD (Ages: 3-4):** 9:15-1:30 (\$121/wk; \$482/mo) \*limited availability\*
- **SUNFLOWER POD – MWF FULL DAY:** 9:15-3:00 (\$168/wk; \$672/mo)
- **SUNFLOWER POD (Ages: 3-4): M T W Th F:** 9:15-3:00 (\$278/wk; \$1113/mo)
- **NATURE PRE-K POD (Ages 4 ½ -5): M T W Th F:** 9:15-3:00 (\$299/wk; \$1196/mo)

\*Enrollment/Age Guidelines – next page

## ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES for POD GROUPINGS

- \*Little Acorn Pod\* turn 3 years of age by September 1 (T TH)\*
- \*Sunflower Pod\* turn 3-4 years of age by September 1 (MWF \*and\* full-time: M-F)
- \*Nature Pre-Kindergarten Pod\* turn 4 by Sept 1, attending all 5 days (M-F 9:15-3:00)

\*Cat Sun accepts a limited number of enrollment slots for each pod to keep ratios, activities, and age-groupings in balance. This may be adjusted from year to year, and at the discretion of the Owner/Head of School & Co-Teacher, Ms. Natalie. This *\*may\** include acceptance of children who fall slightly under three years of age and is on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out with any questions!