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# PARENT HANDBOOK

## 2011/2012

*\* Riverhouse Children's Center is a Peanut-Free Facility \**

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## Mission

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The mission of the Riverhouse Children's Center is to provide high quality care and early education services to young children. Riverhouse believes all families deserve access to exemplary child care regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, family composition, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious beliefs or political affiliation.

Riverhouse Children's Center is a nondenominational, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit child development center. The school provides child care and early education services year-round for families with children age six weeks to five years old. Riverhouse currently serves 78 families, 52 children per day and is made up five classrooms: the Pollywog Room (6 weeks to 12 months); the Bumblebee Room (12 months to 24 months); the Caterpillar Room (24 months to 36 months); the Butterfly Room (36 months to 5 years); and the Bear Cub Room (36 months to 5 years).

Riverhouse Children's Center employs an emergent curricular model. While we have identified developmental goals for every child in our care, we have not predetermined the road map to achieving each goal. Riverhouse teachers are trained to take the lead from children. If children are enamored by a concept on any given week, lesson plans and daily activities will reflect their interest. It is the responsibility of the teacher to: 1.) thoughtfully observe the children in their care and determine what themes are peaking their curiosity; 2.) weave socioemotional, language, gross motor, and early mathematical learning into the thematic planning process.

Riverhouse requires stringent education-based prerequisites for all teachers. Each of the five Riverhouse classrooms utilizes the *Creative Curriculum* as well as *Teaching Strategies GOLD* -- powerful teaching tools which facilitate individual child assessment, organized documentation and curricular planning.

Riverhouse is proud to be a program which serves children with special needs. Additionally, we contract directly with the Colorado Department of Human Services to serve low- to moderate-income families who qualify for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Riverhouse also offers a subsidized tuition rate to assist families who display significant financial need, but fall just above the income guidelines stipulated by the Department of Human Services. Riverhouse is committed to serving a diverse constituency base and to making quality child care and early education services affordable and accessible to all families.

## Key Staff and Board

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Amy De Prosopo Davlin Ed.M. accepted the position of program director of the Riverhouse Children's Center in August 2009 and executive director in January 2010. Amy graduated from Harvard University in June 2009 with a Master of Education. Amy was a member of the Human Development and Psychology cohort at Harvard and her studies were concentrated within the field of early childhood developmental psychology. While at Harvard Amy was afforded the opportunity to study and conduct empirical research under the guidance of professors Howard Gardner and Paul L. Harris, two influential academics examining the field of Early Childhood today. In June of 2009 Amy declined acceptance into

Columbia University to pursue a PhD in education. Instead, she opted to return to her home in Durango pledging a personal and professional commitment to improving circumstances for young children in this unique rural community.

Amy has ten years of professional and academic experience in the field of Early Childhood. In addition to her position at Riverhouse, Amy is an adjunct faculty member at the Southwest Colorado Community College where she instructs early childhood education. Prior to joining the Riverhouse team, Amy was employed as the executive director of the Children's Museum of Durango. Amy has two years experience as a lead teacher in a Pre-primary/Primary/Kindergarten Montessori environment, three years experience creating and overseeing Infant and Toddler classrooms, as well as six years of ongoing supervisory and administrative experience in both corporate and nonprofit child development settings.

Kim Barker was elected to the position of president of the Board of Directors of Riverhouse Children's Center in December 2009. Kim moved to Durango three years ago and her son Lucas attends Riverhouse in the Butterfly Room.

Upon moving to Durango, Kim opened Lovebug Clothing Co, an internet based children's retailer; she supports all functions of this international business. Prior to moving to Durango Kim and her family resided in Chicago, IL where she was employed for 15 years at JPM Chase. Kim was part of the executive management team, managing the Private Asset Management Division responsible for over \$50 billion in assets and 125+ employees.

Kim has always found herself as active member of community life. While in Chicago, Kim focused her volunteer time and fundraising efforts for the Susan B. Omen Breast Cancer foundation and the Children's Memorial Hospital. She served on two boards which provided countless opportunities to benefit the community: The Chicago Ballet and the Junior League of Chicago.

#### Hours/Months of Operation

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Riverhouse Children's Center offers care 12 months per year. Riverhouse is open from 7:30 am to 5:25 pm Monday through Friday. Riverhouse is closed several weeks per year and on national holidays. Scheduled closures are outlined on page 11 of this handbook.

Riverhouse Children's Center is not a day care center. Riverhouse strives to provide high quality early education services as well as high quality care for young children. Many of the important aspects of your child's day will occur in the morning. Please aim to drop off your child between 7:30am and 9:30am each day so they may have the opportunity to fully integrate into the activities of the school day.

Riverhouse adheres to all 9-R school district snow/weather related delays and closures. Please see page 9.

#### Email/Website

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Riverhouse's primary mode of communication with families is email. Please ensure that Riverhouse has your most up-to-date email address and that you are checking this email periodically throughout the week. Riverhouse sends monthly invoices wirelessly and announces all major school events via email. You may contact the executive director here:

[RiverhouseDirector@gmail.com](mailto:RiverhouseDirector@gmail.com). You may contact the board of directors here: [RiverhouseBoard@gmail.com](mailto:RiverhouseBoard@gmail.com).

Additionally, please check the Riverhouse website, [www.riverhousecci.org](http://www.riverhousecci.org), for upcoming events, school closures, parent forms, etc.

### Child Pick-Up Policy

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Riverhouse Children's Center, in accordance with Colorado State Regulations, will only release your child to an authorized adult. An authorized adult is someone who you have specified as an authorized person on your child's Emergency Waiver form. The designated person will be required to show picture identification at the time of pick up. If an unauthorized person tries to pick up your child, you will be notified immediately by phone. If you can not be reached we will call the authorities and your child will not be permitted to leave the building. All visitors (non-parents) are required to show identification and sign in at the door.

If a parent or authorized adult attempts to pick up a child while intoxicated as a result of alcohol or controlled substance abuse the executive director will immediately contact the authorities.

An authorized adult must be available to pick up your child at all times. If your child is ill, injured, or needs to leave school grounds for any reason and Riverhouse is unable to reach an authorized adult within a 1 hour period Riverhouse staff will report the incident to the Department of Social Services. If you are over 30 minutes late (6pm) picking up your child from Riverhouse and staff is unable to reach an authorized adult the incident will be reported to the Department of Social Services.

### Illness Policy

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Please do not bring your child to school if they have displayed the following symptoms in the past 24 hours: diarrhea; vomiting; a fever; a rash or allergic reaction; or conjunctivitis (pink eye). If your child has been prescribed medication by a physician for conjunctivitis, lice, or any communicable disease, they must have been taking the medication for a period of 24 hours and display no other symptoms.

Sometimes children experience a high level of stress due to changes in the home, changes at school, or a combination of external variables. Generally, if a child has been in distress for over a period of 30 minutes parents will receive a phone call from Riverhouse alerting them to the situation and to elicit advice. In an instance where your child is deemed to be too uncomfortable to be at school you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately.

If your child becomes ill with diarrhea; vomiting; a fever of over 99.9; a rash or allergic reaction; conjunctivitis (pink eye); or is unable to finish their day at school successfully there must be someone available to pick him/her up. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that either a parent or an emergency contact person is available at all times. In case of an emergency or illness, parents will be contacted first. If they are not available we will go down the Emergency Contact list until an authorized adult is notified and available to pick up.

In the case of a child with a communicable disease (chicken pox, etc,) you will be alerted by email with the date of the diagnosis and the number of children infected. State Law requires that the local health department be notified of the diagnosis of certain communicable diseases.

### Parent Policy

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Riverhouse teachers and staff are professionals in the field of Early Childhood Education. If a parent or family member treats a Riverhouse employee in a rude, disrespectful, or belligerent manner the executive director and the Riverhouse board of directors reserves the right to expel the family from the Riverhouse Children’s Center. The family will have one opportunity to appeal this decision to the board of directors in writing and at the next monthly board meeting.

Please be advised, Riverhouse teachers and staff document any/all incidents which occur on school property and are deemed inappropriate, unprecedented, and/or noteworthy. These documented incidents will be retained in your child’s file for the duration of your tenure at Riverhouse Children’s Center.

### Sign In and Out Procedure

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It is the responsibility of the parent to accurately sign their child in and out of Riverhouse every day. The sign in /out sheet is located on the front table. If you do not sign in and out accurately you will be charged the maximum extra hours charge (\$6) for each day you a failed to do so.

### Food Program

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Riverhouse Children’s Center employs a full time cook – Margaret! - who prepares a home-cooked, nutritionally balanced breakfast and lunch to all Bumblebee, Caterpillar, Butterfly, Bear Cub, and older Pollywogs every day. The cost for the food program is included in the cost of tuition. Margaret and Amy meet with a nutritionist once per month to discuss the nutritional balance of planned meals for the upcoming month. Riverhouse is happy to accommodate restrictive diets including dairy intolerance, allergies to wheat, gluten, and other foods, as well as vegetarians; however, we may ask parents to aid with meal ingredients.

The Riverhouse Food Program serves James Ranch beef and cheese and whole grain bread from Bread, LLC. Riverhouse is committed to purchasing locally in the Four-Corners community and all the meat and dairy products served are organic, sustainably raised, and hormone-free. For all non-animal based food products Riverhouse purchases organic and local whenever financially feasible.

Each family in the Bumblebee, Caterpillar, Butterfly, and Bear Cub classrooms is asked to bring an afternoon snack to school approximately twice per month. The snack is for your child to share with his/her class. It must be nutritious, free of food-dyes, very low in sodium, and very low in sugar.

Parents of Pollywogs must provide pre-prepared, labeled bottles, and enough food for each day. Pollywog teachers do not prepare bottles in classroom as this poses a risk of cross-contamination.

If your Pollywog is able to eat solids, please provide a list of safe foods for us to share with your child. When appropriate, your Pollywog may partake in the Riverhouse Food Program meals.

### Diapering and Potty Policies

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Pollywog, Bumblebee, and Caterpillar parents are required to provide diapers for their child. Children's diapers will be changed every two hours, as well as at any additional times during the day when needed. Bumblebee and Caterpillar staff will be supportive of potty training by providing consistent and stress-free opportunities for your child to use the potty. All parents are required to provide an extra pair of clothes to leave at school in the event of an accident.

Riverhouse does not coerce a child to use the potty, nor punish a child developmentally for not using the potty; i.e. a child will not be held back in a developmentally inappropriate classroom because they are unable to use the potty. However, any child who is not using the potty consistently will wear diapers or pull-ups at school.

### Field Trips

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The preschool department (children over 3 years) is the only department permitted to partake in field trips. Field trips will be posted on the website and sent out via email. If your child's class decides to take an impromptu field trip to the park or to the library for story time, you will be contacted by your child's teacher via phone. Impromptu field trips are extremely infrequent except in summer session.

Field trips will be supervised by parent volunteers and staff. Generally, Riverhouse students take the trolley to their destination. If the trolley is not an option we will ask parents to volunteer to drive children to the destination.

### Parent Volunteers

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Riverhouse is always in need of parent volunteers! Riverhouse is extremely lucky to have a wonderful group of parents who assist us with anything and everything from painting classrooms, to organizing fund raising events, to pro bono legal advice, etc.

If there is something in particular you feel you have to offer the school, please see the executive director so that your unique talents can be put to good use. We expect parents to consistently help in making Riverhouse a wonderful place for children to grow and thrive.

## Clothing for School

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As long as weather permits every child will have an opportunity to play outside every day. Please provide a raincoat and hat on potential rain days. Snow pants, hats, gloves, boots, and coats are required for each child during the winter months.

If the outside temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit the Pollywogs will remain within the center. If the outside temperature is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit the Bumblebees and Caterpillars will remain within the center. If the outside temperature is below 20 degrees Fahrenheit the Butterfly and Bear Cub students will be permitted to go outside if appropriately dressed for brief (15 to 20 minute) intervals.

## Staff Supervising Responsibilities

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All Riverhouse educators are required to utilize a Transition Tracking Sheet in their classrooms every day. The Transition Tracking Sheet requires educators to count each child under their care at repetitive intervals during the school day and then to sign off on these counts with their initials at each transition time. Each staff member is responsible for a specific group of children at all times. In case of an emergency where a child can not be immediately located, the teacher will immediately notify the executive director who will notify the child's parents. If the child is not located within 5 minutes the executive director will contact the authorities.

## Emergency Policy

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In the case of natural disaster (tornado, wildfire, etc) we expect parents to pick up their children immediately. If there is a tornado warning, the children will be brought to the basement of the Riverhouse. If there is an emergency in which Riverhouse must be evacuated, we will notify parents by email, then by phone, and evacuate all children to the side driveway beneath the carport. A copy of all emergency contact information for all families is housed in a waterproof container outside the school.

## Discipline Procedures

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The policy of The Riverhouse Children's Center on discipline is to treat each child with respect in all situations. A child will not be placed in "time out" at Riverhouse Children's Center. If a child is segregated from the group due to inappropriate or aggressive behavior, they will be accompanied by a teacher and/or the executive director who is readily available to discuss the nature of the incident, why it was inappropriate and what a more appropriate response might have been.

For serious behavioral problems which may endanger other children and/or teachers, a parent may be contacted immediately by phone. If a pattern of aggressive behavior develops a behavior modification plan may be developed with collaboration from parents and the director.

In circumstances where a child has physically injured other children or teachers in his/her classroom three times during any given day the child may be sent home. While Riverhouse understands this may be a significant hardship for families it is our responsibility to keep every child under our care safe at all times. If the need arises, it will be the parent's financial responsibility to seek the help of a behavior specialist.

### Incident Reporting

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In the case of any physical event (injury) a Riverhouse Incident Report will be completed by the teachers present. One copy of this report will be sent home and one copy will be filed in your child's file. This report will be confidential to each family; i.e. if another child was involved in the infraction this child's name will not be divulged.

### Immunization Policy

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Riverhouse accepts children who are not fully immunized, but highly recommends that all children in a care setting be immunized. Riverhouse welcomes children under six months of age. Young infants have not had the opportunity to be immunized because of their age. Exposure to peers and older children who have not been immunized can result in dangerous illness.

### Snow Days

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Any snow delay or weather-related closure announced by the 9-R school district will be applicable to Riverhouse Children's Center in 2010/11.

If 9-R announces a 1-hour delay Riverhouse will open at 8:30am; in the event of a 2-hour delay, Riverhouse will open at 9:30am; and in the event of a 9-R school district closure Riverhouse will be closed.

For information regarding 9-R closures you may call 247-5411, ext. 1500, visit [www.durangoschools.org](http://www.durangoschools.org), or visit [www.Riverhousecci.org](http://www.Riverhousecci.org).

### Adding/Dropping Days on your Permanent Schedule

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Riverhouse will not reserve days for families who choose to drop scheduled days during the summer, or any other time of year. If you choose to drop days of attendance at any time, these days will be offered to other families on the Riverhouse wait list.

If your child is sick, or misses a day, you may not drop-in on another day without incurring a daily cost. Riverhouse budgets around your child's scheduled days. We employ teachers to accommodate the classroom's anticipated daily needs.

### Medication Policy

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Prescription medication will only be administered by Riverhouse staff under the following circumstances:

- Written authorization from your health care provider is provided
- Parent written authorization is provided
- The medication in its original container
- Documentation on the care and storage of the medication

### Filing a Complaint with the State of Colorado

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If you have cause to file a complaint about Riverhouse Children’s Center with the State, please contact:

**The Colorado Dept of Human Services  
The Division of Child Care  
1575 Sherman Street  
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714  
(303)866-5958**

### Child Abuse Reporting

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In the case of suspected child abuse the executive director will report suspicions to social services and local law enforcement authorities. Riverhouse Children’s Center has a legal and ethical obligation to report suspected child abuse and will not hesitate to do so.

### Drop In Days

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In the event the Riverhouse has an open slot in any given classroom families have the option to “drop in” that day at an added cost: Pollywogs/Bumble Bees = \$40 per day; Caterpillars = \$39 per day; and Butterfly/Bear Cub = \$38 per day; plus any extra hours costs that are applicable.

If you have scheduled a drop in day that you wish to cancel, this cancellation must take place 24 hours prior to drop off (7:30am) on the scheduled drop in day. If you fail to give Riverhouse 24 hours notice you will be charged the full amount for the drop in day.

### Riverhouse Children’s Center Tuition and Fees 2011

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- Tuition rates are subject to change at the start of each semester or summer session
- An annual \$50.00 Registration Fee will be charged
  - at the time your first invoice is issued; and
  - at the start of each school year in August
- Riverhouse offers a 10% sibling discount
- Tuition payments for an upcoming month are always due the 25<sup>th</sup> prior to the start of that month. If payments have not been received by the 5<sup>th</sup> a \$10 per day late fee will be issued unless you have worked out prior arrangements with the executive director

- If you intend to withdraw your child from the Riverhouse program one month (30 days) notice is required; if under one month notice is given you will be charged for 30 days from the date you gave notice of the scheduling change
- Riverhouse does not offer vacation/sick credits and does not credit for holiday closures, or national holidays in specific months
- All tuition rates reflect a 7:30 am – 3:30 pm school day; the afterschool care charge is \$3.00 per hour from 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm
- If your child is sick, or misses a school day, you may not drop-in on another day without incurring a drop-in daily cost; Riverhouse will not trade days of attendance
- Tuition rates include the cost of food; two homemade meals per day per child. There is no added cost associated with the Riverhouse Food Program
- If you fall behind on your tuition payments on any given month you will receive notice that your child has been removed from Riverhouse attendance rosters for the coming month -- Additionally, the outstanding balance on your account will be sent to collections

#### **Pollywog/Bumblebee Care**

- Rates reflect a 7:30 am – 3:30 pm school day
- Afterschool charge is \$3.00 per hour from 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

<b>Days Per Week</b>	<b>Rate Per Month Per Child</b>
1	\$173
2	\$347
3	\$520
4	\$693
5	\$867

#### **Caterpillar Care**

- Rates reflect a 7:30 am – 3:30 pm school day
- Afterschool charge is \$3.00 per hour from 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

<b>Days Per Week</b>	<b>Rate Per Month Per Child</b>
1	\$169
2	\$338
3	\$507
4	\$676
5	\$845

**Bear Cub and Butterfly Care**

- Rates reflect a 7:30 am – 3:30 pm school day
- Afterschool charge is \$3.00 per hour from 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

<b>Days Per Week</b>	<b>Rate Per Month Per Child</b>
1	\$160
2	\$321
3	\$481
4	\$641
5	\$802

Riverhouse Children’s Center Scheduled Closures 2011

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2011

**March 7 to 11** - closed for Spring Break

**May 27 & 30** - closed in observance of Memorial Day

**July 4** - closed in observance of Independence Day

**August 18, 19** - closed for Teacher Work Days in preparation for the 2011/12 school year

**September 5** – closed in observance of Labor Day

**October 10** – closed in observance of Columbus Day

**November 23, 24, 25** – closed in observance of Thanksgiving

**December 23, 26, 27, 28, 29** – closed in observance of the Winter holiday

2012

To be announced.

## Thank you Community Heroes!

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Riverhouse Children's Center is a public charity. Without the support of the local La Plata County community we could not continue to serve young children. In 2010 the following businesses and individuals helped Riverhouse raise \$62,000 to support the early care and education program!

Please thank the individuals and patronize the businesses who are investing dollars back into the health and vitality of the Durango community.

**\$25,000 +**  
**BP America**

**\$5,000 - \$10,000**  
**The Glacier Club**  
**The Anschutz Family Foundation**  
**The Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado**

**\$1,000 - \$5,000**  
**Ballantine Family Foundation**  
**Durango Mountain Resort**  
**Casey & Davlin, Attorneys at Law**  
**First National Bank of Durango**  
**LPEA Round Up Foundation**  
**United Way**  
**Wells Group of Durango**

**\$500 - \$1,000**  
**Arlen Charitable Trust**  
**Carver Brewing**  
**Kim and Jason Barker**  
**Mike Matz and Sally Shuffield**  
**Mr. and Mrs. James Patch**  
**Pediatric Associates of Durango**  
**Blueline Reprographics**  
**Zabots Design**

*Questions regarding this document can be directed to Amy De Prospro Davlin, executive director, at 970-247-0204, or [RiverhouseDirector@gmail.com](mailto:RiverhouseDirector@gmail.com).*