

MAY 2023 Newsletter for Families



Riverhouse by the Numbers

The year SHINES rating system began in Colorado	2015
Riverhouse's SHINES rating from our last rating in 2019	3
# days for SHINES window for the drop-in evaluation (could happen any weekday in June, except June 2nd)	21
# pages of documentation we estimate we'll be sharing with SHINES in May to document our programs, staff qualifications, policies, etc.	400 +
% of Colorado childcare providers with a rating of 3 or higher	25%
# of childcare centers licensed in Colorado	5,000

Week of May 8th - 12th is Teacher Appreciation Week!

Please bring in any of the following if you can to show our teachers that they're valued!

- **Snack items - energy bars, fruit, snack bags of popcorn, raisins, baked goods, etc.**
- **Gift cards for \$5 to \$10 for Durango Joe's, Raider Ridge, Zia's, etc.**
- **Cards of appreciation just to say "thank you"**

DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

- * Teacher Appreciation Week..... ..May 8-12th
- * UPK 1st Round of Matching ends..... May 10th
- * Riverhouse Garage Sale 8 - 12 pm May 13 th (Sat)
- * May Parent's Night Out..... May 20th (Sat)
- * May Board of Directors Mting..... May 25th(Thur)
- * Eagles' Graduation Ceremony & Party-May 26th
- * Last day of Spring SemesterMay 26th
- * All-Day Teacher Training (No School)...June 2nd

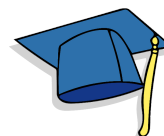
Table of Contents

Universal PreK-----	page 2
Parent Survey -----	page 2
Health & Wellness-----	page 3
Colorado SHINES.....	page 3
Parent's Night Out.....	page 4
100 Women Who Care.....	page 4
Thank You	page 4
Classroom News -----	page 5
Thoughts from the Director....	page 5

RIVERHOUSE HOURS Mon - Fri: 7:30 am to 4:45 pm

Eagles Graduation: Friday May 26th from 4 to 5:15 pm
at Folsom Park. Ceremony begins at 4:15.

4:30 - 5:15: Party with food & activities for the kids!



Colorado Universal PreK - Update!

Yes - the cost of your 4 year old's tuition will go down



In a nutshell: Colorado UPK is 15 hours of free childcare for 4 year olds, starting in the 2022-2023 school year. You don't need to qualify - everyone gets it - but you do need to sign up at : [UPK.Colorado.Gov](https://www.upk.colorado.gov)

The state will confirm all "matches" in Round 1 on May 10th. You must accept or decline the match. If you don't accept, the spot goes to another family in Durango that is trying to get childcare for his/her four-year-old. (We have NO control over this!) Round 2 information is on the above website.

Children or families who qualify for CCCAP (Colorado's Child Care Assistance Program) or other funding sources (Head Start, for example) can stack UPK on top of those hours. Families can also privately pay for other hours. All combinations of payment will be allowed with participating providers. So, your child can go to childcare for 40 hours, and you can pay for 25 privately, and have 15 paid for. Riverhouse is a participating provider.

Parent Survey Results



We received 38 out of 60 possible responses - a 63% return rate so far. The most salient information includes:

- 87% report they are very or mostly satisfied with Riverhouse
- 58% report they are "very satisfied" with their teachers, and another 34% are mostly satisfied.
- 38% would like to see cameras installed, and 46% are "maybes"
- 73% are happy with the number of activities we currently have
- 58% would like to see more personalized and cultural practices
- 62% (24 families so far) would like to see a bilingual program
- 36% report we need to improve transitions & 36% say they're great as is
- 40% would like to see more Parent's Night's Out offerings

We hear you and are making these plans based on the feedback we're receiving:

1. Hummingbirds - we're adding Rie to the team to help with communication
2. Bilingual Program - we are pursuing this; stay tuned in the fall!
3. 5 pm Pick-up - this will begin as of Friday September 8th of this year
4. More consistent updates on what my child is learning - we are following through with this to be sure parents get more information
5. Nap time - we are shortening nap times and will follow through with this. Eagles has already been shortened, and will go away entirely this summer.
Falcons & Blue Jays - 2 hr maximum time on their cots. Nap times are 12:45 to 2:45.
The other, younger classrooms, have a nap schedule according to the individual children's needs or - as in Sparrows - when the teachers deem it is needed.

Riverhouse Health & Wellness

With the warmer weather, sickness has definitely decreased, although many staff and children alike are struggling with allergies.



Note: 1) Please bring a hat & sunscreen for your child!

2) San Juan Basin Public Health advises everyone about the risk of animal-borne diseases such as rabies, plague (from fleas, chipmunks, squirrels, and prairie dogs), West Nile Virus from mosquito bites, Tularemia (a bacterium found in rodent and rabbit populations), and tick-borne diseases (present like the flu and should be checked out for possible Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever).

Use insect repellent, vaccinate pets against Rabies, clean outdoor & dusty areas with masks and gloves, and do not mow over sick or dead animals.

3) Bonnie, our nurse, visited Riverhouse on Thursday May 4th to provide wellness checks for over a dozen staff members (it's something that's required of all staff once a year).

Our nurse is Bonnie Liebscher. Her email is: bonniewaller94@gmail.com

Colorado Shines



*The **Colorado Shines** Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) is a tool for assessing, enhancing, and communicating the level of quality in early care and education. It rates all licensed early childhood programs in Colorado for quality using research-based standards. All licensed Child Care Programs that serve children prior to kindergarten participate in Colorado Shines. A SHINES visit happens once every 3 years and our visit happens this June.*

All licensed programs automatically receive a Level 1 rating. Programs have the option to pursue higher ratings at Levels 2 – 5. Shines provides incentives and supports to encourage all early care and learning programs to make ongoing quality improvements. Quality levels 3, 4 and 5 are our goal. We are currently at a 3, which is considered good. We'd like to be at a 4. There are 5 categories that are focused on:

1. **Workforce & Professional Development** - how qualified are our staff? How committed are we to ongoing professional development (very!) On June 2nd 18 teachers will be taking an all-day training in Conscious Discipline at Ft Lewis College. We regularly train in 1st Aid/CPR, Language Development, and with many more online courses in trauma, safety, and child development.
1. **Family Partnerships** - this looks at our family activities (such as holiday events), Parent's Night Outs, a parent support group, working with families on such things as children's transitions to other classrooms, meeting special needs of children, and other family supports.
2. **Leadership, Management, & Administration** - staff development, workforce support, program operations, and commitment to continuous improvement.
3. **Learning Environment** - our curriculum, the classroom spaces, furnishings, program structure, activities, and teachers' interaction with the children.
4. **Child Health** - how is our food program? Do we provide hearing, vision, and dental screenings? Do we promote both physical and mental health?

Facility Update

- * We have added an outdoor seating area for staff to take breaks.
- * We've spruced up the playground in preparation for this warmer weather! Tarps are going up soon!!!
- * We have been working on our storage spaces so we can better access toys and other materials that we switch out, replace, or only use seasonally.



PLEASE REMEMBER to wash your hands & your child's hands upon entering Riverhouse!

Saturday Parent's Night Outs

Once a month we offer "Parent's Night Out" - two staff members sign-up to watch your child(ren) at a cost of \$25 for one child or \$40 for two children. Next PNO is Saturday, May 20th from 4 to 7:30 pm. Sign-up sheet is in the upstairs lobby entrance. It is capped at 10 children, so sign-up early.

Saturday was very popular last month - we filled up early.

The Lobby has free Loan items in it. Need to borrow a car seat? Clothing? Even diapers or formula? We have them in the lobby... please just see Chloe, Becky, or Angie to sign things out.

1 + 100 Women Who Care (About Riverhouse!) 😊

In February we were awarded \$11,000 from this local all-female giving circle. Then, the Robert Schutz Family Foundation supplemented their contribution with a \$5,000 grant, so we ended up receiving \$16,000. When we applied for the money, we had to designate a need. Ours was health care benefits for staff. This money enabled us to sign up - in March - all of our staff who did not already have a primary care provider with a doctor through Durango Primary Care (Dr. Andy Owens). That is currently 10 staff members. We also have a contract that allows us to send over any new hires for the required wellness exam. The cost to Riverhouse is \$800 per month, or (x 10) \$8,000 for 2023. On May 1st we added dental benefits for 14 staff members at a cost of \$550 per month, or \$4,400 for the rest of 2023. That's a total of \$12,400. The remaining \$3,600 is currently set aside to help us pay for mental health services for any staff. They may go see our contracted Mental Health provider, Haley Wiedenman, for up to four sessions. All of these benefits are at zero cost to the employee. There is not even a co-pay with Direct Primary Care. This is a huge thank you to 100 Women Who Care!
<https://www.100womenwhocarelplata.com/>

THANK YOUs - to ...

- **volunteer, Heather Grzyb for doing our new brochure! We are delighted to once again have an updated brochure to hand out to prospective parents, new staff members, and interested donors.**
- **volunteer, Elizabeth Devlin, for her hours and hours of work on the child waiting list and the UPK sign-up process**



Classroom News - our Older kids!



Eagles with Ms. Haylee & Mikhaela & now Callie Moss

Eagle kids have summer fever and are excited to start spending more time outside and adventuring in

Durango! They recently started a unit on Dinosaurs and fossils and will be performing an "ice excavation" in the coming days.

Callie Moss, whom most of the Eagles have known since they were in Falcons, will be the Lead in charge of the summer program. Callie has been with Riverhouse for a year and a half, and is a student at FLC during the school year.

Falcons with Ms. Lexi +, Ace, & Mikhaela

The Falcons have been learning about farming and planting. They will be planting tomatoes in milk jugs and then transferring them over to their garden space in the play yard. Academically they are focusing on categorization - such as colors and reviewing past topics such as the ocean and dinosaurs.

Blue Jays with Kathy, Makayla & Tatiana



The BlueJays will be spending the next few weeks learning about their classroom community, enjoying the outdoors including planting, and then taking a look at planet earth!

Classroom News - the Youngest!

Sparrows with Brooke & Jess, Callie D. & Ace...

Sparrows have been learning about planting and flowers. They have been working on filling their new outdoor planter and creating special mother's day presents.

Academically they are working on Mothers Day presents, practicing numbers, letters, and colors.

Hummingbirds (12-18 months) with Lupita & Darcy & Paola.

Rie - who's been in the Blue Jay's Room, is joining the team to help with English and communication in general.

Hummingbirds have been learning all about food! They have spent time focusing on fruits and now are enjoying all things vegetables. We will have a bunch of healthy eaters after this!!!

Chickadees - with Jeana, Heather, & Jayda

In the baby room, Chickadees have welcomed two new babies (Iris is the youngest at 3 months of age). One of the babies has just started crawling, and one is now army crawling. Everyone is growing up so fast. They also said goodbye to Tatum, Forest, & Llewyn who have recently moved up to the Hummingbirds Room.



Last Word from the Director....

SHINES is a lot of work, with quite a bit of stress thrown in, but it is undeniably a way for us to look carefully at Riverhouse's programs, policies, and procedures and ask ourselves: How can we do better given the resources that we have?

Because of this upcoming evaluation, we have already:

- **Increased professional development & all teachers have set individual goals**
- **Done a family survey, a playground improvement plan, and improved our Risk Management Plan. We know what our center goals are!**
- **Are taking a closer look at our classroom curriculums and how we provide parents with developmental information about their child(ren)**

If you've ever had a great mentor or coach, you know that being held accountable for improving is a good thing - it makes us better. I am 100% confident that SHINES - no matter what our rating ends up being - is making us a better center.

The summer will be great, and the 2023-2024 school year will really be awesome!

Enjoy this wonderful weather - we sure are here at the center!

- Becky, your grateful director

***GARAGE SALE SATURDAY MAY 13TH
8 AM TO 12 NOON!***

Please drop-off items on FRIDAY MAY 12th

Small items - in the lobby

***Big items - outside in front on the windows and
under the overhang***

***We are raising money for summer
activities including field trips, water toys,
and playground equipment.***

