

# THE EARLY YEARS



WALDORF SCHOOL  
ORANGE COUNTY

## Playgroup Classes

18 months to 3 years

You Choose One:

Tuesday 8:45 - 10:45  
Wednesday 8:45 - 10:45  
Thursday 8:45 - 10:45

### Fall Session 2023

September 5 - December 21\*

### Winter Session 2024

January 9 - March 22\*

### Spring Session 2024

April 9 - June 14\*

\*With school closures aligned with the WSOC calendar

**\$400 per session (or)**

**\$1,000 for all 3 sessions purchased at once**

Fees are non-refundable



Open-ended play allows children to explore, wonder and create, which is the foundation for learning. We come into the world with an intense interest in our new environment, and play is the avenue for cognitive, social-emotional and physical development in young children.

## Bridge Classes

3 years old by December 1

a "bridge" between Playgroup, Nursery and Pre-K  
(2 years old considered with teacher approval)

You Choose One:

Tues 11:00 - 1:00  
Wed 11:00 - 1:00  
Fri 8:45 - 10:45

### One Session 2023-2024

September 5 - June 14\*

\*With school closures aligned with the WSOC calendar

**\$1,000 for the year**

Fees paid in one non-refundable payment

## Why Waldorf?

Today's research tells us that the first five years of a child's life are critical to their health and well-being. These years create a trajectory in terms of interest in learning and self-actualization. Science has also shown us that the more senses used in learning (sight, smell, taste, touch, hearing, movement, as well as adding a sense of the other or empathy), the stronger the brain development.

Worldwide, early childhood educators recognized the importance of the early year experiences before the science validated their work, and the first early childhood educators provided young children with opportunities for open-ended, creative play. Waldorf early childhood educators recognize the same wonder and instinctual engagement in young children that Jean Piaget saw and gave different labels to (sensory motor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational). Yet, Waldorf educators also take the respect for the students one more step, and that is to recognize how critical it is to integrate the qualities (think empathy and artistic), experience (think hands-on and active) and "thinking" (intellectual engagement and cognitive development) in order to meet the individual human being as more than just a brain.

## Parent & Infant Class

pre-crawling infants & caregivers

Mondays 11:00 am - 12:30 pm

### Fall Session 2023

September 18 - October 23

### Winter Session 2024

January 8 - February 12

### Spring Session 2024

April 8 - May 13

**\$200 Per Session**

Fees paid in one non-refundable payment

**Registration Opens - April 25, 2023**

**<https://mytads.com/a/wsocplaygroup>**

## Playgroup & Bridge Classes

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The **Playgroup and Bridge** classes at the Waldorf School of Orange County provide a door to literacy through story and circle with movement, song and verse. The Early Years program offers children a rich environment for exploration and play, and provides parents support in creating a healthy home life to create a solid foundation for children and family life.

### Daily Rhythm

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#### **Arrival -**

The morning will begin with free play for the children while parents/caregivers practice silent observation for the first 15-20 minutes. The children play in the comfort of a home-like environment with natural and simple materials. The simplicity leaves the children free to imagine how to meet their own needs and to create their own scenarios and intentions. Children younger than four see the world from their center and they play alongside other children, observing others but sharing and interactive play is not expected. While the children continue to play, parents may share their observations and questions, with input from the teacher, and enjoy some quiet conversation or help with simple purposeful work (preparing snack or folding laundry). You will be surprised by what you can observe when not distracted, and this observation supports your parenting more than you will know.

#### **Welcome Circle & Story -**

**T**eachers will sing to invite parents/caretakers and children for a simple circle and story around the circle rug. The circle will focus on nature or the season. The story is told using puppets to provoke interest and inspire imagination. Parents join the circle helping their child to move, sing and laugh with the group. This is a special time to enjoy being with your child, and experience how they will imitate what they see and what you do. Song and verse is foundational literacy, while the joy of movement supports physical development. All of it feeds the architecture of the developing brain.

#### **Snack Time -**

A simple and healthy snack is provided by the school, with consideration for allergies. The children sit at the table with teachers and with their parents immediately behind them. The snack is served following a simple verse (blessing) to offer appreciation and gratitude. Parents are asked to model very quiet voices for simple, young child-appropriate conversation. This type of experience supports socialization (development of social skills needed to engage in life) for the children. When the children finish eating, they will take their dish and spoon to the dishwashing station and scrape, wash and rinse them. This simple "habit forming" is a beginning of what Waldorf education calls "will work", and starting this simply and early with ease and comfort sets the foundation of a sense of "we just do what is needed to take care of our home and others."

#### **Outdoor Play -**

Children will have opportunity for open-ended exploration and play in the Early Years yard where opportunities abound. Be prepared for your child to get wet or even muddy. Outdoor play provides opportunity to climb a hill or push the cart up the hill, use the mud kitchen, dig or build in the sandbox and look for fresh eggs laid by our chickens. These sensory experiences support the neural networking in your child's brain development.

#### **Goodbye -**

The time together will close with a song, goodbyes and the smile of knowing we will return again the next week.

## Parent - Infant Classes

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The **Parent-Infant** classes provide an opportunity for parents to observe their child with facilitation and support from a trained and experienced Early Childhood specialist. In a safe and beautiful environment, infants will have floor time with their parent close by. Parents have experienced these observation-style classes as a breath of fresh air, peaceful moments, and often a parent's favorite part of their week. These classes provide parents with an opportunity to learn about their child in a way that our busy lives often do not provide.



### A Brief History of Waldorf Education

Waldorf education was founded at the time of a reformation in education and reflects theory in line with the founder, Rudolf Steiner's predecessors John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau (stages of education), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (the "whole" child), and Friedrich Froebel (all life should be seen as school and so named "kindergarten" or children's garden). You can see the commonalities between Waldorf education and the work of Maria Montessori, Loris Malaguzzi (Regio Emilia) and John Dewey (the Progressive Movement in America) relative to hands-on or active learning. Steiner's vision aligned with his contemporaries in that education should begin where the learner is; whatever the child brings to the educational experience is to be worked with, not against. Yet Steiner's vision also included the intention for graduates to not only have skills and knowledge but to be able to "read life" and engage in life with an interest in fellow human beings and life-long learning. At the Waldorf School of Orange County, the teachers strive to model, lead, guide and teach with the qualities of enthusiasm, art in all forms, purpose and joy. This begins in the early years.

### Your Teacher

Holly Richards brings 25 years of experience at WSOC, including Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grades 1-5, Early Childhood Teacher Preparation, and mentoring as a Regional WECAN Representative. Her years teaching Early Childhood Education classes at Saddleback and CSUF since 2013 also support her work with young children and parents. She earned her B.A. in Child and Adolescent Development from California State University at Fullerton, her M.A. in Human Development with a focus on Leadership in Education from Pacific Oaks College, and her Certificate in Waldorf Education from Rudolf Steiner College.





# FAQs

## What is the difference between Playgroup and Bridge classes?

They differ only in that the Bridge classes provide an opportunity for the children to play independently, (for a portion of the class), under the guidance of our teachers, while parents meet nearby for a study about Waldorf and parenting.

## Can I purchase more than one Playgroup session at a time?

Yes. Sessions may be purchased one at a time or all together at a discount. **Classes fill very quickly, we encourage you to sign up for more than one session at once if you are considering it. We don't want you to be disappointed if classes fill for the next session before you are registered!**

## What happens if I have to miss a class?

No problem! We recognize that there are going to be days when you are not able to make it. Since our Playgroup curriculum is play-based, there are not concerns about missing a class. It is the overall rhythm of attendance that is important. There are no "make-up" days offered.

## Can another adult bring my child to class?

Certainly. We are happy for either parent, grandparent, nanny, or friend to bring your child. In fact, it is a lovely way to introduce that person to the Waldorf School curriculum.

## May I join a Bridge class mid-year?

If there is space remaining in a Bridge class, we welcome a new student at a pro-rated fee.

## When do we apply for Nursery or Pre-Kindergarten?

It happens very quickly! The deadline for application for the next fall occurs in January each year. This deadline is important to note as our Nursery and Pre-Kindergartens fill each year and we want to be certain that we can welcome our Early Years and Nursery students first.

## How can I learn more about Waldorf Education?

Why not begin by joining us for an all school tour? These Walk Through the Grades tours are offered throughout the school year. To RSVP - <https://www.waldorfschool.com/events/>

## What if I have questions? Who do I ask?

Registration/fees/refund questions are directed to **Maureen McDermott**, Registrar - [mmcdermott@waldorfschool.com](mailto:mmcdermott@waldorfschool.com) - (949) 574-7775 x208.

Application to Pre-K, Nursery and long-term program planning questions are directed to **Kathy Christian**, Admissions Director - [kchristian@waldorfschool.com](mailto:kchristian@waldorfschool.com)



**Registration Begins April 25, 2023**

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[www.waldorfschool.com](http://www.waldorfschool.com)

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