

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 2024

September 9 - November 15*

Winter Session 2024-25

December 2 - February 28*

Spring Session 2025

March 10 - May 30*

*classes follow our holiday schedule available on the website

\$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 2024 - 2025

September 9 - May 30*

*classes follow our holiday schedule available on the website

\$1,000 for the year

Fees paid in one non-refundable payment

Parent Study Group

Adults only please

RSVP @ parentstudy@waldorfschool.com

Mondays: 9:00 - 10:30 am

2024- 2025

September 9 - May 19*

*classes follow our holiday schedule available on the website

No fee associated with this program

Open to all parents in Playgroup, Bridge, Nursery,
Pre-K, K and 1st - 4th Grade classes

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 (touch, movement, balance, smell, taste, hearing, sight, and sense of the other) the stronger the neural network and brain development.

Worldwide, early childhood educators recognized the importance of the early year experiences before current 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. Yet, Waldorf educators go one more step, and that is to honor the child's stages of development and protect their childhood.

Registration Opens - April 1, 2024
<https://mytads.com/a/wsocplaygroup>

Playgroup & Bridge Classes

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

Arrival -

Our time together begins 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 will just be starting. 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 -

Teachers 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. Parents join the circle helping their child to move, sing and laugh with the group. The story is told using puppets to provoke interest and inspire imagination. 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 -

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

The **Parent Study Group** provides an opportunity for parents and caregivers to gather support for their parenting journey.

The Parent Study Group is open to **adults only** - parents of children, infancy through 8 years. We study from a variety of books and articles to expand our understanding of child development from an Anthroposophical perspective and the Waldorf curriculum. Our time together also provides an opportunity for parents to share current parenting challenges. Attendance at the Parent Study Group is available for "dropping-in". You are not required to attend on a regular basis.

Parent Study Group



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 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 29 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 - (949) 574-7775 x208.

Application to Pre-K, Nursery and long-term program planning questions are directed to **Brooke Natzke**, Admissions Director - bnatzke@waldorfschool.com

How do I reserve space in the Monday Parent Study Group?

Simply send an email to: parentstudy@waldorfschool.com to save your space (adults only for this class, please)



Registration Begins April 1, 2024

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

www.waldorfschool.com

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