

**2022-2023 Family Handbook:
Program Policies and
Procedures**

Kinderhaus

PO Box 114 Decorah, Iowa
52101 (563) 379-7303
info@kinderhausdecorah.com

OUR VISION: Kinderhaus was created by parents to provide a nurturing and beautiful environment for young children to spend time playing in nature and the indoors with imaginative, cooperative, and natural toys. It is a Waldorf-inspired early childhood program for 3-6 year olds modeled after European outdoor kindergarten.

OUR PRACTICE: Kinderhaus strives to develop the whole child: emotionally, socially, artistically, and cognitively through: -Daily exploration and play in nature -Song and movement during daily transition -Storytelling and puppetry -Exposure to daily and seasonal rhythms of our region -Emphasis on community, ceremony, and reverence -Imaginative play with natural toys, painting, and clay modeling.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Kinderhaus PO Box 114 Decorah, IA 52101
 Administrative cell: 563-379-7303 Teacher contact
 (during program hours) 563-379-7303
www.kinderhausdecorah.com
info@kinderhausdecorah.com

FACILITIES: We meet at Good Shepherd Church at 701 Iowa Avenue. The church phone number (which should be used only in the case of emergencies) is 382-3963. In compliance with the Iowa Smokefree Air Act of 2008, church and center facilities and outdoor properties are smoke and nicotine free environments. Persons under the influence of alcohol and drugs will not be permitted in the Kinderhaus classroom space. Preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

CALENDAR: The Kinderhaus year generally runs from Labor Day until Memorial Day. We follow the Decorah public school calendar for holiday breaks and staff development days.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS:

We strive to ensure that families feel supported in their decisions regarding programming for their children. Our enrollment process encourages inclusion of the following components which may be combined or omitted as appropriate:

- Parent inquiry and conversation with a Kinderhaus representative resulting in a firm understanding of Kinderhaus programming and philosophy

- Introduction and tour (virtual or in person) with a Kinderhaus representative (with or without child),
- The completion of an electronic or paper Registration Form.

Completed Enrollment Forms can be:

- Sent electronically here (link coming soon)
- Given to a teacher or director at Kinderhaus between 8 AM and 3 PM, Monday-Friday
- Scanned and emailed to info@kinderhausdecorah.com
- Mailed to Kinderhaus P.O. Box 114, Decorah, IA 52101.

Kinderhaus would gladly mail you hard copies of our enrollment forms. Please contact us at info@kinderhausdecorah.com for assistance.

It is the policy of Kinderhaus not to discriminate in its education programs, educational activities, and scholarships on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs which foster knowledge of, respect, and appreciation for the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men, women, and non-binary individuals, to society.

Enrollment and Wait List priority will be given in the following order: 1) Current students, 2) Siblings of Kinderhaus students (current or past), 3) Children that qualify for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant 4) Other applicants. Within each group, spaces will be allotted in the order that registration paperwork and fees are received. A Wait List will be maintained in the event that Kinderhaus has no student openings available. If your child is a returning student or a sibling of a current or former student, their enrollment form is due on **March 3rd**. You will be informed of your child's schedule (or wait list status) by **April 3rd**. Please inform us of any schedule changes as soon as possible.

Students must be at least 3 years old by September 15. Under special circumstances a family may request an exemption from this policy. Exemptions will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Kinderhaus staff and board. Those children who are 3 years old after September 15 and

receive an exemption will be given a one month trial enrollment. A conference between parents and staff will be arranged within the trial month to discuss further enrollment. Children under 3 years old on September 15th may only be considered if there is an opening and enrollment is not full.

New students may begin between September and January. No new students will be added after January. Changes to your child's schedule may be made throughout the year with Director and Board Approval.

Once Enrolled:

The Kinderhaus Director will be in communication with you regarding your child's enrollment status by April 3rd or in late spring-into summer if there are any schedule changes. We appreciate your patience and flexibility as we strive to have our program accessible for as many families as possible. Once enrolled, communications and preparations for the coming school year will begin in August.

TUITION ASSISTANCE:

HAWC: Funding for income-qualifying 3 year olds. Up to full tuition assistance depending on family income. Application ongoing, but guaranteed by September 1.

Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant: Funding for children turning 4 years old by September 15th enrolled in a participating program meeting 10 hours or more. Free tuition for 4 year olds attending Kinderhaus 3 mornings/week.

KinderGrant: in-house grant prioritized for qualifying families based on conditions below; application due May 15th or upon admittance to program

1) 5-year old and 6-year old children qualifying using HAWC criteria. Up to \$100/month assistance for 5 day program, \$60/month for 3 day program, and \$40/month assistance for 2 day program. Assistance will be divided equally among qualifying families.

2) 3-year old, 5-year old, and 6-yr old children qualifying using HAWK-I criteria. In the event that funding exists following distribution outlined in #1 above, remaining funding up to \$100/month assistance for 5 day program, \$60/month for 3 day program, and \$40/month for 2 day program, divided equally among qualifying families.

3) 4-year old children qualifying using HAWC criteria. In the event that funding exists following distribution outlined in #1 and #2 above, remaining funding up to \$100/month assistance for 5 day program, divided equally among qualifying families.

4) 4-year old children qualifying using HAWK-I criteria. In the event that funding exists following distribution outlined in #1, #2, and #3 above, remaining funding up to \$100/month assistance for 5 day program, divided equally among qualifying families.

POLICY FOR WITHDRAWAL: In order to avoid tuition for a given month, written notification of your intent to withdraw must have been received one month in advance on or before the first of the month. (For example, the March payment would not become payable if the office receives such notification on or before February 1st.) Our hope in this policy is to better accommodate waiting families in a timely manner.

SCHEDULE: The Kinderhaus program meets Monday-Friday from 8:45am-12:15pm. Children may attend 3, 4 or 5 days. Our daily schedule varies with the rhythm of the seasons and weather conditions. Greater indoor time occurs during the winter with dropping temperatures. We strive to spend as much time as possible outdoors throughout the entire year. We will not meet outside if hail, thunder, or lightning are present or if the temperature, including wind chill is below zero. Completing our morning walk and spending time outside are two of our greatest priorities. We are also committed to maintaining a consistent order of events during the day. A consistent schedule helps to increase cooperation as the children are able to predict what events are forthcoming.

8:45-9:00 Arrival

9:00-9:45 Center Exploration or Walk

9:45-10:00 Circle

10:00-11:00 Bathroom, Handwashing, Snack, Dishwashing 11:00-11:45 Project Work and/or Center Exploration 11:45-12:15 Clean Up, Story, Closing Circle

12:15 Departure

AFTERNOON SCHEDULE: Kinderhaus now offers optional afternoon care for up to 8 children. Children who are enrolled for full days will bring a sack lunch with them daily. Following lunch, the children will rest. Kinderhaus will supply cots with sheets, and families will provide their own small pillow and a blanket to remain at the school. Children who have trouble falling asleep will be able to look quietly at a book. We believe in the importance of rest for young children, and are happy to create a soothing, peaceful, and cozy atmosphere for our students to quiet their minds and bodies in the middle of their day.

12:15-1:15 Handwashing, Lunch, Bathroom

1:15-2:00 Rest
 2:00-3:15 Free Play, Baking, Projects

ARRIVALS: We have observed that the morning transition into school occurs more smoothly when children are able to join activities from the beginning. Stepping into the middle of something is often confusing and difficult. Please help your child's transition by arriving between 8:45-9:00. **Please get your child to Kinderhaus by 9:00 AM.** If you know in advance that you will be late, please call the teachers at 379-7303.

The Kinderhaus garden is located on the west end of the church lawn. For safety and social modeling, it is important that guardians walk their children to the teachers after parking in the nearby parking lot or on the street. The teachers greet the parents and children with a warm handshake, hug, or hello. Please do make the teachers aware of special situations for your child (tiredness, low spirits, etc.) that may impact their Kinderhaus experience for the day. If another authorized individual will be picking your child up, please tell the teachers and write it on the attendance sheet. Please encourage your children to use the bathroom immediately before bringing them to Kinderhaus. Please apply sunscreen and bug spray when necessary.

DEPARTURES: Pick-up time is 12:15 pm for the morning program and 3:15 for the afternoon program. Parents/guardians will park in the parking lot, or in the case of inclement weather, on Iowa Avenue near the Fellowship Hall entrance. We appreciate your cooperation in being on time. If you wish to discuss a matter with the teachers, please do so by phone or when the children are not present. When the teachers are with the children, their whole focus needs to be with them. We have observed that when you pick up your children, it is best for them if you take them home and not visit with other adults while the children wait. They can be tired, and a nice quiet walk or ride home followed by lunch and conversation helps make the transition time from Kinderhaus to home pleasant and easy. Children may only be released to individuals listed on their current registration paperwork unless otherwise authorized by a guardian.

ABSENCE/SCHEDULED LATE ARRIVAL: If you know your child will be absent due to a vacation or an appointment, please contact the teacher 24 hours in advance. If your child is ill or must miss school, please call in the morning by 9:00 AM at **563-379-7303** or let the teachers know in advance. If your child is able to attend a partial day at school (e.g., morning doctor's appointment), please call the teachers to discuss, and decide together what arrival/departure time will work best.

TRANSPORTATION: We recognize that our staff and parents may have personal relationships outside the realm of the Kinderhaus program. Any transportation of Kinderhaus children by Kinderhaus staff or volunteers outside of the Kinderhaus program hours is viewed as a private arrangement between parents and staff or volunteers exclusive of any organization or involvement by the Kinderhaus program. Kinderhaus staff and volunteers shall only transport children in a

privately owned vehicle and may not receive any compensation for such transport. The requirements of Iowa Code section 321.446 shall be followed.

FIELD TRIP and NON-CENTER ACTIVITIES: Our group frequently takes short field trips within walking distance of the school. An additional staff member, beyond the required ratio, is present when the group is away from the Kinderhaus center.

For farther or longer field trips, notification will be sent home, informing parents about the nature of the trip and also ensuring that they are aware of and supportive of extended trips away from the center. On occasion, the Decorah School District or Earl Public Transit may be involved in transportation during a field trip. In the event that parents are asked to help with driving for a field trip they will be asked to provide “proof of auto insurance”. Children will also be secured in moving vehicles following state of Iowa law. In the event that a parent chooses to have their child not participate in a field trip, they are then responsible for supervision of their child at that time.

Any non-center activities not defined as a field trip will not be considered part of the Kinderhaus program.

HEALTH FORMS:

Health files will be maintained for both staff and children in a locked location within the center. Each child must have the following forms turned into the director within **30 days** of your child beginning attendance at Kinderhaus:

- an annual physical examination or statement of health condition**
- an up-to-date immunization record or notarized exemption**
- authorization of preferred doctor, hospital and dentist to be used in case of emergency**

We recommend you set up a doctor’s appointment for your child well in advance before the school year begins, or have your doctor sign the health form on your child’s birthday. Forms can be found on our website.

Kinderhaus may access medical advice or consultation through contacting the Visiting Nurse Consultant and/or Public Health Nurse. The Visiting Nurse Consultant and/or Public Health Nurse will audit child files annually, inspect for safety, and be available for inquiries.

CLASSROOM SAFETY: Our policy has been created to protect the children and staff at Kinderhaus from the unnecessary spread of illness and to encourage their presence in our program when they are well-enough to participate as part of our community. Class size will be limited to 15 children present at any one time.

Kinderhaus classroom materials include some objects (e.g. glass beads, nuts, paperclips, and marbles, etc.) which are allowable for use with children ages 3 and older but do pose some risk for choking, especially for those children under 4 years of age. Staff will be within close proximity to the children while they have access to these materials and will observe carefully to facilitate safe use of the materials. Children will not be allowed to put these materials into their mouths.

Staff will also vigilantly supervise the use of any materials with strings longer than 12” long that are not secured at both ends. This applies, specifically, to the stepping blocks in the outdoor classroom and pull toys and aprons indoors. This policy may apply to any other qualifying material.

In the event that observation of a child or discussion with caregivers alerts staff to the likelihood of a child misusing the materials in an unsafe manner, the materials will be removed from the environment.

Any live animals within the center must appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children.

Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water pans or water play to reduce the chance of spread of infectious diseases. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water tubs and buckets are drained. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and pans.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, staff will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries requiring follow-up care or observation will be documented on an “Incident Report” form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

Kinderhaus has written policy for reporting child abuse and neglect. These policies are available upon request. All teaching staff complete “Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse” at least every three years and within six months of employment.

ILLNESSES: Your child may not participate at Kinderhaus or may be sent home if the following conditions exist:

- a. an illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in the activities planned.
- b. an illness that results in a greater care need than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the children.
- c. fever (1 or more episodes within the last 24 hours or until a health care provider determines that the cause is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration).
- d. symptoms or signs of possible severe illness such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability, fussiness, or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for a child
- e. Diarrhea, defined as loose, watery, and frequent stools (1 or more episodes within the last 24 hours or until a health care provider determines that the cause is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration).
- f. *Salmonella typhi* until three negative stool cultures are obtained; *Shigella* or *E. coli* until two negative stool cultures taken at least 24 hours apart. If treated with antibiotics, samples should not be taken less than 48 hours after therapy is done; *Norovirus* until 24 hours after diarrhea and vomiting cease and stools are formed
- g. Blood in stools not explained by dietary change, medication (such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin), or hard stools
- h. Vomiting illness (1 or more episodes within the last 24 hours or until a health care provider determines that the cause is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration)
- i. Mouth sores with drooling unless a health care provider determines the condition noninfectious
- j. Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- k. Pink or red conjunctiva (pink eye) with white or yellow discharge (or clear discharge with fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness) until all symptoms are gone
- l. Scabies, head lice, or other infestation until 24 hours after treatment
- m. Tuberculosis until medically cleared by a physician
- n. Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment
- o. Strep throat or other streptococcal infection until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- p. Chickenpox until all sores have dried and crusted
- q. Pertussis until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed or 21 days of cough if not antibiotics are given
- r. Mumps until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling or until symptoms are gone

- s. Hepatitis A virus until 1 week after onset of illness or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis has been administered to appropriate children and staff
- t. Measles until 4 days after onset of rash
- u. Rubella until 6 days after onset of rash
- v. Unspecified respiratory tract illness
- w. Erythema infectiosum (5th disease) with fever
- x. Persistent abdominal pain (lasting more than two hours) or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever or other sign of illness
- y. Scabies until after first treatment
- z. Herpes simplex infection of the mouth in children who do not have control of oral secretions
- aa. Bacterial meningitis until 24 hours after starting antibiotics
- bb. Coronavirus related information can be found in our coronavirus prevention plan

Please let us know if changes occur in your child's health or eating habits. Also please let us know if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease.

In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, such as strep throat or chickenpox, a sign will be posted at the main entrance and an email will be sent out to families. If a child becomes ill while at Kinderhaus, the parent or an emergency contact will be notified. The child will be supervised in a quiet area to rest until the parent arrives to pick them up. If you cannot pick up your child shortly after being contacted, please notify someone on your emergency contact list.

We ask you to keep us informed of the advice received from your healthcare provider regarding your children. The Kinderhaus director and staff reserve the right to admit or exclude a child regardless of the health care provider's recommendations. Staff will give extra attention to hand washing and disinfecting surfaces (1/4 C bleach/1 gallon cool water and/or hydrogen peroxide) and use Universal Precautions.

MEDICATION: Medications will only be administered by the director or onsite supervisor under the advice of medical professionals. Additional requirements are available for review within the staff handbook and will be made available to parents or medical professionals when requested.

Sunscreen and insect repellent are considered other health products, not medications, but will be kept inaccessible to children in the first aid kit. While we recommend wearing hats and applying

sunscreen prior to arrival at Kinderhaus, sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only with your written parental permission to do so) when deemed necessary. We may also use an insect repellent containing DEET (only with your written permission) no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites only when the public health authorities require its use.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS: A first aid backpack can be found indoors hanging inside the kitchenette to the left of the doorway, worn by Kinderhaus staff when on a field trip, or hanging on the outside coat rack when the group is in the outdoor classroom. A supplemental first aid kit is always available in the cabinet over the sink in the kitchenette. The first aid kits comply with DHS regulation and include a working cellular phone, emergency personnel phone numbers and child-specific emergency contact information. Children will not be permitted access to the first aid kits. All staff members will have current pediatric CPR and first aid certification. Medical professionals and organizations listed on the child's registration form will be contacted as needed. Emergency contact information and medical information will be transported with children if needed.

Fire extinguishers are located in each indoor teaching classroom. Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

In the event that an evacuation is required due to fire or carbon monoxide, Kinderhaus staff will relocate the children to the West Side Early Childhood Center on Iowa Avenue. In the event that a greater distance from the center is required in an evacuation due to flood, bomb threat, or chemical leak Kinderhaus staff will relocate the children to Casey's Convenience Store on College Drive. Complete emergency plans can be requested for review as documented in the Staff Handbook. Staff reviews this information annually.

A NOTE ABOUT SLEEP: It is sometimes difficult to make that transition from summer to the Kinderhaus year, and getting adequate sleep can help. **Most young children need 11-12 hours of sleep** to function their best, and a peaceful and harmonious bedtime is important to produce this healthy sleep.

TOYS/PLAY: We have found that toys from home are easily lost and broken, are not easily shared, and are distracting. **Children are required to keep toys brought from home in their backpack or cubbies.**

Play that is considered threatening shall not be allowed at Kinderhaus.

Our intention is to provide for as much outdoor play as possible in balance with safety and comfort for the child. **With this policy, we want to remind you of the importance of dropping your child off in a timely manner, as a child arriving late may miss a much-needed opportunity to play outside. This can then set the child, his peers, and the teachers up for greater indoor challenges.**

Individual children will remain inside if a teacher determines that they don't have adequate clothing to go outside and adequate clothing is not available. If a child comes to school without adequate outdoor clothing, the parents will be asked to take their child inside to find appropriate clothing in Kinderhaus storage. If the need for additional clothing is discovered after the parents have departed, the teachers will find appropriate clothing in the Kinderhaus storage, if available, and will contact the parents with a notification and a reminder the first, and second time. The third time a child comes to school without adequate outdoor clothing, the parents will be notified and the child will be sent home.

Children who are unable to safely go outside during winter weather for medical reasons must have written permission from their parents to that effect. In these cases, Kinderhaus will provide supervision of the child during the time that the group is outside.

Parents who want their children to remain inside during outdoor time, without medical reasons, within the guidelines of this policy will be responsible for providing supervision of their child during the time the class is outdoors.

CLOTHING: We consider Kinderhaus a "Play Clothes Only" environment. We enthusiastically encourage and value free play and exploration, and it should be expected that your child's clothes may become soiled or damaged while they engage in their "meaningful work."

We almost always meet and remain outside, at least for a short period of time, as outdoor time is an important part of our curriculum. Warmth is very important in the early years. Heads need to be covered both for protection from cold and protection from sun. Children are often not conscious of losing body warmth and need to be protected. Winter gear will need to keep the children extremely warm. We recommend layering. If you have any questions regarding rain or winter gear please talk with us. Please ensure that your child arrives with the following

conspicuously visible when weather conditions warrant:

Fall/Spring: (rain gear is required if precipitation is evident or expected or the ground is wet or muddy)

Waterproof boots Waterproof coat Waterproof pants Sweater or sweatshirt to

wear under a rain coat Hat, gloves or light mittens during cool weather times
 Hat, visors, and protective clothing for sun protection Shoes or sandals (must
 have a “strap in the back” rather than flip flops) if desired

Winter: Long underwear or layers

Thick wool socks or two pairs of socks Wool/fleece sweater
 Face protection (neck gator, balaclava, or scarf) 2 pair of
 warm and **waterproof** mittens or gloves Hat that covers the
 ears Warm, **waterproof** boots that cover the ankles Warm
 coat and **waterproof** snow pants or full body snow suit

Indoors: Indoor shoes/slippers that remain at Kinderhaus

Change of clothes: Please keep a seasonally appropriate change of clothes available for
 your child. Please, no media-inspired images (i.e. television or movie characters) on
 clothing, as these have been observed to have negative effects on the children's attitude and
 creative playtime. **Please label all clothing and outerwear your child brings to
 Kinderhaus.**

Note about boots: It is often necessary to wear waterproof snow boots before and
 following snow season. Most rain boot/warm sock combinations do not keep the children's
 feet warm enough in late fall and early spring.

HEARTY SNACK: Kinderhaus provides a hearty snack mid-morning which the children often
 help to prepare. If your child has any allergies to certain foods, please let us know as soon as
 possible. Our menu is posted on our postings board at the entry to Kinderhaus. We occasionally
 substitute the accompanying fruit or vegetable with other seasonal produce. Licensing
 requirements mandate that we ensure that children under the age of 5 are offered 2 of the following
 4 components in accordance with CACFP standards: milk, fruits/vegetables, grains/breads, meat or
 meat alternative. Exceptions are allowed for allergy, medical, and religious, etc. reasons with
 written instruction of a licensed physician or health care provider or written documentation of
 religious requirements. If snacks are brought from home due to allergies, we are required to
 supplement them to meet the CACFP standards. In the event that a snack does not meet CACFP
 nutrition guidelines, we will supplement with dried plums or
 whole grain rice cakes. Snacks that may not meet CACFP nutrition guidelines may be provided for
 special occasions such as birthdays.

As the number of children with allergies increases, we feel strongly that we should minimize the
 food-allergy risks to as great a degree as reasonably possible. Allergic reactions to foods vary from

life-threatening respiratory conditions to sensitivities leading to skin reactions, abdominal pain, and ear infections. As nut allergies are often the most severe within a group of young children, and are increasingly common, we will follow the example of many schools and programs throughout the country and commit to being a *PEANUT/TREE NUT FREE PROGRAM*.

We will not be using nut products in our food program. Snacks and lunches brought from home will not be allowed to consist of or contain nuts or their oils due to contact exposure danger. Ingredients that are “produced in a facility which processes nuts/peanuts” are allowable. If you have a child with a severe allergy, please contact the director and we can make accommodations for optimal safety.

MENU

Monday - Applesauce, yogurt and granola

Tuesday - Whole wheat bread, chevre, and kale

Wednesday - Potato wedges, hummus, and carrots

Thursday - Egg, popcorn, and oranges

Friday - Edamame, muffins, and butter

Birthdays Cake and cheese

PARENT COMMUNICATION: Next to safety, proactive, open, and consistent communication between parents, children, staff, and volunteers is our greatest priority. We hope that you will feel comfortable sharing any suggestions, concerns, or comments with our teaching staff. We have found that a cooperative relationship with our families is essential in providing the best environment possible for each child. There is so much that we can learn from you, the families, to help us be responsive to your children and yourselves. We welcome and encourage communication about the events and emotions affecting your children. Our desire is to provide an oasis of warmth, play, and friendship with others for your children. What their experiences are, outside of Kinderhaus, does affect them inside of Kinderhaus. We feel that recognizing, respecting, and considering those experiences helps us to respond to the children on a daily basis. If your child had a big party the night before, is leaving to go to Grandma’s tomorrow, is sad from the loss of a pet, etc., it is very helpful for us to know about it.

We welcome the opportunity to get to know your family through our New Family Orientation in the Summer prior to your children attending Kinderhaus, Home Visits with 4-year-old families, and Meet the Teacher Days for all children. Each of these events happen prior to the school year beginning.

During the school-year we strive to provide timely communication with families on a weekly

basis through a weekly newsletter so that you may more fully share in your child's experience at Kinderhaus. Our teachers look forward to and are grateful for the opportunity to greet you at the beginning and end of each of our days. Kinderhaus hosts fall and spring conferences in November and February. Telephone, email, or in-person conferencing is also welcome throughout the year.

During conferences and throughout the school year, we wish to explore your child's continued growth and areas for support. This information may be gathered through conversations with you, Teaching Strategies Gold assessment which aligns with the Iowa Early Learning Standards, and time spent in community with your child at Kinderhaus. Our teaching staff is constantly utilizing daily observations and interactions to adapt the program to best meet the individual needs of the children. Conferences, in-person and telephone conversations, emails, and Teaching Strategies Gold assessment are all ways that we strive to share information with you.

Our goal is to work as a team to identify what best serves the child. A child may be best served through modifications beyond typical Kinderhaus programming. A team consisting of parents, teachers, and director, as well as any other invited individuals may work together to explore helpful modifications and interventions. Kinderhaus staff can also assist in making a request to the Keystone Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formal assessment.

The Kinderhaus Board always welcomes any suggestions or concerns that families or staff wish to present.

In the unanticipated event that an individual feels discriminated against, the school district Affirmative Action Coordinator, Rick Varney, can be reached at (563) 382-4208. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800, Milwaukee, WI, 53203-2292, (414) 291-1111, or the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294.

Please inform the teachers or director in the event that you need translation, reading assistance, etc. to access any and all information and clearly understand the content of our communications. Kinderhaus will work with private individuals or district or Keystone AEA personnel for assistance.

PARENTAL ACCESS: Parents legally have unlimited access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the center's hours of operation or whenever their children are in the care of the center, unless parental contact is prohibited by court order.

BIRTHDAYS: We are excited to invite your family to celebrate your child's birthday at

Kinderhaus. Our birthday celebrations take place on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings to accommodate our project time on the other days. You will receive a detailed invitation as the date draws nearer to your child's birthday celebration.

FESTIVALS/FELLOWSHIP: (all of the following events are subject to be changed or cancelled depending on the status of covid-19 spread in our community)

Orientation: This evening allows us to share information about the Kinderhaus program, answer questions, and take suggestions. We normally invite returning and new parents to Orientation in August.

Home Visits: Our lead teacher will come to the homes of each of the families participating in the 4-year-old grant program prior to the beginning of the school year. What a fabulous opportunity to get to know each other! If desired, the visit can happen anywhere other than at Kinderhaus: parks, the library, a coffeehouse all can work very well.

Meet the Teacher: We welcome families to visit Kinderhaus just prior to the beginning of our school year to help familiarize the children with our teachers and Kinderhaus space. It is a great time to stock your cubby with your extra set of clothes and hand in supplies and paperwork.

Autumn Festival: This gathering provides an opportunity to join together as we begin our journey through the year. The children re-enact our autumn story of wisdom and courage before we begin our potluck dinner.

Festival of Light: As the days grow noticeably shorter, the frosty winter nights approach their longest, and we all begin to yearn for the light which so recently illuminated our lives. To symbolize this yearning, the families of Kinderhaus participate in our Spiral of Light Festival. In a semi-darkened room, lit only by candles and smelling of evergreens, we are present and surrounded by tranquil music. Each child goes, one at a time, through the spiral of evergreens to the center of the garden. Each child lights his or her candle, then returns to their space around the spiral and places their candle in front of them to light the way for the next child. This passage reflects winter's dark coming to a close and the renewed promise that spring light and life will begin again.

Spring Festival: We celebrate the ending of our school year together with a potluck, graduation ceremony, and fire. The children receive special "fairy stone" necklaces with a bead added for every year they've attended Kinderhaus.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: The Board of Directors is made up of 7 individuals serving 3-year terms. We currently meet on the third Wednesday of each month from 7:00-9:00 pm. A list of our current Board members can be viewed at www.kinderhausdecorah.com. We welcome diversity of demographics and thoughts within our Board and service is open to anyone within or outside of the Kinderhaus community. Please let us know if you are interested in serving on the

Kinderhaus board.

Meetings are open for anyone to attend and are generally run in a relaxed manner. Please feel comfortable bringing suggestions, comments, or concerns to our attention. Our goal is to improve Kinderhaus and be responsive to those involved in the organization and wider community.

FUNDRAISING: Kinderhaus relies heavily on fundraising and grant efforts to meet our expenses. We are interested in hearing any fundraising ideas that you might want to share. We are incredibly grateful for the generous response toward fundraising that our families and others in the community have shown toward Kinderhaus. Our upcoming fundraisers/events for the year are as follows:

August: Two Parent Help Days (Setting Up Outdoor Classroom)

October: Parent Help Night (Little Ones)

November/December: Mailing and Facebook Fundraisers

March or June: Kinderfolk on Stage Concert

July: Nordic Fest Lingonberry Ice Cream Stand

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY: Children will remain indoors when hail, thunder or lightning are observable. Children will play outside, at the discretion of the teachers, when rain, snow and/or sleet are observable.

As needed, a hot weather policy will be created. We provide shaded areas for children to play in. Application of sunscreen prior to arrival and the use of sun hats is encouraged.

Kinderhaus cancellations will reflect the cancellation decisions of the Decorah Community School District. **If the Decorah schools are canceled we will NOT meet. If the Decorah schools are delayed, we will begin our day at 10:00.** Cancellation and late start announcements for the Decorah Community School District can be heard on KDEC FM 100.5 or found at <https://schoolalerts.iowa.gov>. You can also sign up through the school district to receive text messages when school is canceled or released early.

In the event that the school district releases early due to weather or emergency reasons, Kinderhaus will release at the same scheduled time as the Decorah CSD release. If you are unable to come to Kinderhaus, please call and notify the teachers. In the event that you are unaware of an early release and you do not come to pick up your child, Kinderhaus staff will contact you or your designated emergency contact individuals by phone.

In the event that there are numerous cancellations throughout the year, we will make up any cancellations beyond 3 days. Make-up days may occur on scheduled vacation days or at the end of the academic year. There is still the possibility of Kinderhaus continuing online through the Winter months and extending into the month of June but that will be determined at a later date.

STAFF/VOLUNTEERS: The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility.

Kinderhaus maintains compliance with Department of Human Services staff:child ratios. Generally, Kinderhaus ratios are lower than required ratios. We can currently have 15 children in attendance at any given moment. A lead teacher and assistant teacher are present and normally accompanied by a volunteer.

Staff and volunteers included in staff: child ratio must submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families and comply with state and federal background checks. No person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. A list of substitute teachers is maintained by the director or designee. All individuals utilized as substitutes must comply with the affidavit and background checks required by staff.

Written annual staff evaluations are completed by the director or designee and placed in the staff's personnel file.

It is the policy of Kinderhaus not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or physical disability in its employment policies as required by Title VI or VIII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES: In most cases, discipline is handled when and where a problem occurs. Involvement by staff in behavior modification may involve positive guidance, with direction for resolving conflict and setting of well-defined limits. In addition, the child or children involved will be helped to make right what has been done wrong. This could involve such things as cleaning up a mess or apologizing for hurtful behavior.

Children may need to lose privileges, or be isolated from the rest of the group for a period of

time if these procedures seem to be useful in helping the child to regain self-control.

The main point of any intervention imposed on a child is to help awaken the child to the way his or her actions affect others. Teachers are never to use physical, corporal punishment or humiliation as a means of control.

Verbal or physical aggression is a very serious concern. Expectations of the children's social behavior and ability for self-control change and increase as the children mature.

In the case of persistent concerns:

- Teachers will seek the cooperation of the child's parents and work with them to reach a satisfactory solution to these problems.
- Teachers will also enlist help from their colleagues or area early childhood consultants.
- A signed contract may be created between the family and the school to set behavioral goals for the child. The contract process clearly explains the area of concern, the procedure being used to monitor and modify the behavior, and the expected results. It also clarifies the steps to be taken following the contract period, such as renegotiating the contract, or obtaining outside services.
- All of the adults in the community need to work together to support the disciplinary procedures.

If parents are contacted about their child for any reason, they need to be aware that the contact is being made to help everyone involved work together for the benefit of the child.

Parents are encouraged to request a parent/teacher conference for any questions or concerns involving the discipline of their child.

TOILETING POLICY: Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, i.e., the bathroom adjacent to the classroom with a fold down changing table. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 7:
 - Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
 - Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
 - Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility. At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.

- Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.

Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.

Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.

3. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
4. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

CHURCH CONSIDERATIONS: We rent our space from the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. We need to be mindful and respectful of their presence in the building at all times. Parents, teachers, and staff should use the east set of doors (near the Fellowship Hall) at all times.