



# *Early Childhood Program Back to School "Quick Reference"*

## *2025-2026*

Updated 7/27/25

*"...I am struck by the fact that the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think that the same is true for human beings. We do not wish to see children precocious, making great strides in their early years like sprouts, producing a soft and perishable timber; but better if they expand slowly at first, as if contending with difficulties, and so are solidified and perfected. Such trees continue to expand with nearly equal rapidity to an extreme old age."* -Henry David Thoreau

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# Welcome

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! We hope you have been enjoying a refreshing summer and that you are feeling renewed and ready to start a new school year at RWS. We are grateful that your family has chosen to be part of this very special Waldorf community. We welcome and value your dedication to Waldorf education, and look forward to working with you and your children this year.

Below you will find a quick overview of dress guidelines and gear requirements to help you get started with your back to school shopping. For full details of the EC program, including policies and procedures, please refer to the RWS Parent Handbook.

Please know that we are here to help and partner with you as we guide students through their educational journey. We couldn't do what we do at RWS without your support. It is such a pleasure to be involved in a community like ours with the common goals of nurturing responsible, caring students while promoting a lifelong love of learning. We are looking forward to the upcoming year and getting back to school!

## Dress Guidelines

The best clothes are those that are “play worthy”, can get dirty, and do not draw attention from others. Simple, well fitted clothes are best. Keep in mind that all the children are outside everyday so we want them to be prepared for a range of temperatures and weather conditions. Given that the children will be outside for the majority of their day, dressing your child in layers allows them to be prepared for the change in temperatures from the early morning to afternoon.

Please refer to the RWS' Dress Code (as referenced in the [Family Handbook](#)) for complete all-school dress code requirements. In short, the school guidelines are:

- Clothes and shoes should have no logos, words, or emblems (other than RWS issued t-shirts).
- Clothes and shoes should not have pictures; small, unobtrusive repeating patterns are acceptable.
- Shoes should enclose or strap around the heel securely and enclose the toes.

In addition, the early childhood educators appreciate your support with the following guidelines for your child's active play, comfort, safety, and freedom of movement:

- Shorts or tights/leggings should be worn under skirts and dresses.
- Playworthy shoes which allow freedom of movement, good traction, and foot protection should be worn daily. Heeled, open-toed, backless, or treadless shoes are not permitted.
- Save clothes that could be described as fancy, dress-up, or a costume for the weekends.
- Jewelry or accessories should not be worn, as they can pose safety risks during school activities.

School supplies (rain gear, lunch box, etc.) should follow the same appearance requirements as the dress code.

# School Supplies - must haves at-a-glance

Basically, the items below are your child's school supplies. *The "To Be Kept at School" list of items below can be brought with you on Visitation Day to stay in the classroom for the school year. **Please clearly label EVERY item with your child's first and last name.***

## To Be Kept at School

- **Indoor Shoes** When the children enter the classroom, they change into indoor shoes. The best types are:
  - A slip-on type of shoe that fully encloses the toes and heels
  - Are soft soled, like moccasins or ballet slippers
- **Rain Gear (3 items)**
  - Rain Boots
  - Raincoat with a hood
  - Rain Pants
  - *Tip: It's best to get a separate raincoat from rain pants rather than a one-piece 'coverall' or 'rain suit' because some days only one or the other is needed, not both. If you purchase online, search for "puddle pants", "rain bibs", and "puddle gear" for options.*
- **Extra Sets of Clothing** Please include 2 sets of seasonal clothing: a shirt, bottoms, underwear, and socks to be kept in the classroom. Have each set in a ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. You will replenish these sets as they are used during the school year, and sets will be changed out seasonally, as needed.

## To Be Brought to School Daily

- **Layers appropriate for the day's weather, including outerwear**
- **Footwear appropriate for outdoor activities**
  - Flexible sole, zero-drop/no heel, wide toe box, with good traction, and easy-on (no laces) is highly recommended. Shoes must enclose toes and at least a strap over the heel.
  - Heeled, open-toed, backless, or treadless shoes (for outdoor wear) are not permitted.
- **Lunchbox and Water Bottle** Children bring their own lunch from home. Please provide:
  - A lunch box with a handle\*
  - A filled water bottle no larger than 8-12 ounces that can fit inside or on a side pocket of your child's lunchbox (to be carried as one unit)\*
  - Silverware, as needed
  - Two small napkins (one for your child's placemat and one to wipe hands and face. These can be paper towels, washcloths, or dishcloths. Please be sure these can fit inside of your child's lunch box
  - Labeling: A Virginia Department of Education requirement is that all lunch boxes and water bottles be labeled with your child's name and the date. You can choose to do this with preprinted labels, wipeable labels, masking tape, etc. Please choose the method that is simplest for you.

\* There are many solid colors and designs to choose from to make your child's lunch box and water bottle personalized to them. We ask that you choose a lunch box and water bottle that does not have video/game/movie/tv characters on them and that the only embellishment is the required labeling. Please exclude other stickers, key chains, beads, bands, small toys, etc.

## *Other*

- **Bicycle helmet and bike** (brought weekly during your child's biking blocks, dates TBD). If your child does not have a bike, it may be possible to borrow a school bike during class. Teachers will provide more specifics before your child's biking block begins.
- **Aftercare Program** (for preschoolers staying 1:00-3:00 or later) (brought weekly):
  - Small blanket (2'x 3') and pillow
  - Optional small stuffed animal or doll
  - *Note: For kindergarteners in The Grove program: the school provides all materials needed for quiet time so there is no need to bring items from home.*
- **Cold Weather Outerwear** to include a coat with a hood or separate hat, gloves/mittens, snowsuit/snow pants, scarf, winter boots, and layers such as thermal wear/tights/leggings. I'm not sure when the good deals start on these items. You may want to wait until October to purchase in case of growth spurts. Plus, the RWS Parents' Association organizes a clothing swap so you may find items that fit your child perfectly.

## *Snack and Lunch*

In keeping with a wholesome environment for the children, we make sure that the snacks we provide are of high quality. When possible, organic foods are used. Our intention is to involve the children with making our classroom snacks when it is safe and feasible to do so.

If your child has allergies or special dietary considerations, you will be asked to complete paperwork detailing those needs. As the weekly snacks are providing nutrition for the whole class, we may not be able to accommodate every allergy on all days; however, teachers try to adapt the weekly menu so that each child can partake of at least part of the daily snack.

We ask that you pack a nourishing lunch; please *do not* include: soda, juice or sports drinks, candy, desserts (cakes, cookies, etc.), Jello, snacks with any type of trading card or toy, or gum. Pack meat and dairy products in a sealed, insulated pack with a cold pack inside or a thermos for warm foods. We also ask that you be mindful to not create extra garbage with prepackaged foods and use reusable containers as much as possible. This is an important part of our children's education.

Families may be asked to contribute food to add to our weekly snack menu. Some teachers prefer that families bring in weekly fruits, nuts, etc., while others prefer that parents sign up to bring in extra items periodically. Your child's teacher or class parent will send out communication about family food contributions at the beginning of the school year.

## *Personal Items*

Oh, how young children love their things! However, toys, jewelry, “collections”, stuffed animals, key chains, watches, stickers, tattoos, purses, etc., etc., etc. are all distracting and are discouraged in the school setting. Please leave these things at home and also “check pockets” if you know your child finds it irresistible to bring these things to school. It can often be the cause of much unhappiness when children have to part with their things when saying goodbye or later during the school day.