

Hare's Paw Farm Program Handbook

Welcome to Programs at *Hare's Paw Farm!*

2024-2025 Program Line Up:

- ✧ Barnyard Stories
- ✧ Farm Chores
- ✧ Cottontails
- ✧ Let's Bake

Handbook Sections:

- ✧ Benefits of the Program(s)
- ✧ Program Policies
- ✧ Dressing for the Weather
- ✧ Behavioral Guidelines
- ✧ Health Policy
- ✧ Curriculum Overview

Benefits of the Programs

Program participants will do the following:

- Observe, wonder, question, and inspire
- Problem solve
- Take risks in their learning and physical development
- Create positive relationships with their peers and teachers

Programs are designed to boost:

- Self-confidence
- Resiliency
- Problem-solving skills
- Self-awareness
- Independence

Nature & Farm Programs have been proven to:

- Enhance a higher engagement in additional activities
- Lower stress levels
- Lessen symptoms of ADHD & ADD
- Increase concentration
- Develop fine motor skills through movement

Program Policies

No Refunds

Hare's Paw Farm reserves the right to cancel or postpone programs due to low enrollment, weather, or other circumstances. If we must cancel a program due for any reason, we will notify you as soon as possible and offer you options for a full refund if applicable.

* We do not offer refunds if a child is asked to leave a program due to behavior issues.

Weather Delays and Cancellations

Programs follow the weather closures of the Lakeville Public Schools. If the Lakeville Schools are closed due to snow or other weather conditions, programs are canceled that day as well. We do not offer refunds for these closures.

Drop Off Programs

Please contact us if your child needs to attend with an aide or other support person. This is not always a guarantee. Parents/caregivers are not allowed to participate in programs. All of our programs are drop-off unless otherwise stated in their descriptions.

Communication

- Email is our primary mode of contact. **Please ensure harespawfarm@gmail.com is added to your safe sender/contact list.**
- Telephone/Text is a last minute communication for program changes, emergency issues, child illness, etc. **Please ensure we can reach you when your child is on the farm.**

Toileting

Children must be fully potty-trained and require no assistance in toileting to participate in our drop-off programs. If a child cannot change themselves, we will call for an early pick up. We do not change diapers, pull-ups, or underwear.

Bathroom is only available for programs 2+ hours.

We have a private camping composting toilet for use with toilet paper and wet wipes provided. There is no entry into the home on the property for toileting breaks.

* We offer frequent bathroom breaks and reminders to young children.

Pick Up & Drop Off

Drop off and Pick up is located at the front of the property. The farm is on a place of residence so please be mindful of the front yard and other program goers. There is no idle parking allowed.

* A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged after a 5 minute grace period. There is no exception to this rule. Please be on time and courteous of the educator's time.

First Aid & Poison Ivy

- Scrapes & cuts: We will wash with soap and water and apply a Band-Aid. We do not apply any topical medications.
- **Sunscreen & Bug Spray:** Parents supply and apply both as needed. We do not provide sunscreen or bug spray.
- If we think your child has been exposed to poison ivy, we will help them wash the affected area with Tecnu, a mineral-oil based product that removes the irritating oils.
- There is a first aid kit on site with band-aids, tweezers, Tecnu, wet wipes, soap spray, towels, & ice packs.
- In case of a major emergency/injury, 911 will be called.

Photos & Electronics

- The Farm often takes pictures to use in its marketing materials. If you would prefer not to have your child's picture taken, please let us know upon signing up.
- Please ensure your child's electronics stay at home, except for essential medical devices. Children with cell phones for pick-up communication may bring those devices, but they must stay in the child's bag.

General Program Ratios

- 6 students : 1 teacher for ages 8 and under
- 8 students : 1 teacher for ages 9 and up

Dressing for the weather

We run our programs through each season and are primarily outside during program hours. Proper dressing techniques are essential for your child’s safety and fun.

Spare clothing & Labels

Please pack a full change of clothes (top(s), bottom(s), socks, underwear) in your child’s backpack for children 6 and under. Please label all of your children’s belongings, especially outerwear, backpacks, and water bottles.

Cooler Weather	Warmer Weather
<p>Best materials/fabrics all year round: synthetics (e.g. polypropylene), fleece, wool, silk. No cotton, as it does not insulate when wet.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base layer: This is your wicking layer, designed to pull chilling moisture away from the body. We recommend a synthetic long sleeve and long pants, e.g. long underwear, athletic fabrics. • Second layer: This is your warming layer. Something “fuzzy” is generally the right thing, e.g. a fleece, wool sweater or long underwear, down jacket, fleece joggers. • Third layer: This is your waterproof layer. E.g. winter coat, rain jacket, snow pants, puddle pants. • Hands: gloves AND mittens are a must. This is usually the first part of a child’s body that gets chilled. • Head: full coverage wool or fleece hat, balaclava or ski mask. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base layer: Synthetic fabrics. Short sleeve or long sleeves. No tank tops. • Second layer: a warming layer may or may not be needed on warmer days. • Third layer: This is your waterproof layer. E.g. rain pants, puddle pants. • Head: Hats with rims are ok.

Required Footwear

Children must wear **sturdy, closed toe** sneakers or boots at all times during programs.

Behavioral Guidelines

Animals	Farm and Environment	Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quiet voices ● Walking feet ● Gentle hands ● Respect the animal's home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Move carefully around plants and fields ● Clean up your space at the end of an activity ● Respect the farmers' work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Listen to educators and peers ● Show kindness towards others ● Share with others

Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Inappropriate behavior will be addressed. Unacceptable behavior will generally be addressed along the following steps:

1. At the first instance of unacceptable behavior, staff will discuss it with the child's caregiver. The Director will email a follow up.
2. The second instance will result in the child being asked to leave for the day.
3. On the third event the child will be uninvited from participating in future programming. This communication will come from the Director.

Unacceptable behaviors include: cruelty to the animals, violence towards others, gross disrespect, bullying, swearing and foul language, blatant disregard towards educators, and willful destruction.

No refunds will be issued if a child is asked to leave a program due to poor behavior. Please note that the three steps above are subjective and will scale up if the first instance of behavior is severe.

Behavioral Meeting

The Director and educators will call a behavioral meeting at either the second or third step, depending on the severity of the behavior. This meeting will determine if the child can return to the program.

* If you have any questions regarding your child's ability to participate in our program, please contact us prior to enrolling.

Health Policies and Guidelines

Please keep our community's health in mind by keeping your child home if they are ill.

- If your child is placed on an antibiotic, they must remain home until they have been on medication for 24 hours.

- Children who have a fever must stay home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours *without* the use of fever-reducing medication.

We ask and expect that children will stay home if they have:

- a fever
- vomited within the last 12 hours
- a persistent and/or productive cough
- a sore throat
- a runny nose that has just begun
- new loss of taste or smell
- chills, muscle aches
- had 2+ cases of diarrhea in the last 24 hours

Any child who vomits during the program day will be removed from their group and sent home.

Allergies

Please discuss your child's allergies with us in advance. There is a section to fill out via the enrollment form.

* Given the hands-on nature of our programming where kids are interacting with a host of potential allergens including crops, livestock, and animal feeds, we may not be a suitable environment for all with allergies.

Curriculum Overviews

What is the curriculum?

- ✓ **Hands-On Learning:** Engage participants through interactive, experiential activities.
 - ✓ **Connection to Nature:** Foster an appreciation for the environment and sustainable practices.
 - ✓ **Free Play Opportunities:** Encourage creativity and exploration through unstructured play in a natural setting.
 - ✓ **Literacy Development:** Integrate reading and storytelling to enhance understanding of farm and nature themes.
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Curriculum Components:

1. Hands-On Activities

- ◇ **Description:** Practical experiences such as planting seeds, composting, animal care, and gardening.
- ◇ **Purpose:** To provide participants with real-world skills and knowledge about farming and environmental stewardship.

Example Activities:

- Planting and tending to a vegetable garden.
- Building a compost bin and understanding decomposition.
- Caring for farm animals and learning their roles in agriculture.

2. Nature Exploration

- ◇ **Description:** Guided explorations of natural habitats on the farm, including plants, insects, and wildlife.
- ◇ **Purpose:** To encourage observation and curiosity about the natural world.

Example Activities:

- Nature scavenger hunts.
- Birdwatching and identifying local wildlife.
- Collecting leaves or rocks for nature journals.

3. Free Play

- ◇ **Description:** Unstructured playtime in natural settings, allowing children to explore and create freely.
- ◇ **Purpose:** To foster creativity, problem-solving, and social skills through self-directed play.

Example Activities:

- Building forts with natural materials.
- Group games that promote teamwork and physical activity.

4. Reading and Storytelling

- ◇ **Description:** Incorporating books, stories, and discussions about farming, nature, and sustainability - among other topics such as friendships, history, etc.

✧ **Purpose:** To enhance literacy skills and connect themes from reading to real-life experiences.

Example Activities:

- Storytime sessions featuring books about farms, animals, and ecosystems.
 - Creating a group story inspired by farm activities.
 - Using nature-themed books for related crafts and discussions
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Do you allow “rough play”?

Yes, we embrace risky play for the “Cottontails” program during play time. Kids are encouraged to climb play structures, run, and engage in consensual rough and tumble play. We do not always play with traditional toys. We provide tools like shovels, wheelbarrows, pots, etc, in addition to play structures, mud kitchens, books, blocks, and more. We strongly believe that by engaging in this type of play, kids develop strong risk management skills and spatial awareness, recognize their own comfort levels, and challenge themselves while building confidence.