Pre-Kindergarten

(307) 733-3729 • www.journeysschool.org

Academic Excellence • Extraordinary Relationships
Place-Based Education • Global Citizenship
Introduction
Journeys School is a Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade independent school in Jackson Hole, Wyoming engaging college-bound students with an innovative and challenging curriculum that cultivates lifelong learning. Our program consists of four critical pillars that act together to empower students to make a positive difference in the world. Our students accept academic challenges and ask hard questions in a balanced, open-minded, and reflective manner. Journeys School is accredited by the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools and is accredited to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program for grades 11 and 12.

The four programmatic pillars include academic excellence, extraordinary relationships, place-based education, and global citizenship. First, the school offers a strong college-preparatory, academic program guided by both critical knowledge and core competencies. The core competencies include skills such as communication, collaboration, leadership, and creativity. Second, fundamental to our program are the extraordinary relationships between students, parents, and faculty. Our commitment to supportive relationships within the community is important to the success of our program. Finally, in order for students to understand the world, place-based education and global citizenship are the final two pillars of the program. At an early age, students begin to learn about the ecological and cultural communities at local and global scales. These skills prepare students to learn, communicate and thrive in a diverse, global community.

Philosophy
“I like going to school.” – Porter, age 4.
Our approach to early childhood education is grounded in our purpose of integrating ecology, culture and community to ensure academic excellence and personal success. Focus is on the whole child and assessments incorporate four main areas of development: social and emotional, language, cognitive, and physical.

The primary philosophical influence is derived from the early childhood teaching practices from Reggio Emilia, Italy. Our philosophy believes strongly in the image of the child and the importance of relationships between children, teachers, and families. Close attention is paid to each child through observation and documentation. The environment also plays a significant role in our teaching practice.

Image of the Child
Children are at the heart of our program and philosophy. At Journeys School Pre-Kindergarten, we believe that all children are competent, capable and empowered with their own ideas. Children’s ideas and interests guide learning in the classroom. The individuality of each child is recognized and developmentally appropriate activities are provided to best accommodate learning.

Relationships
Relationships are a vital role in a child’s education. At Journeys School, we embrace the collaborative relationships between children, parents and teachers. Teachers provide a safe and supportive environment in which all children can feel they have a special place in the classroom.

Observation
When children are given the opportunity to explore their interests, learning is more meaningful. Teachers observe children closely during their play throughout the day in order to better understand their ideas, thoughts and interests. These observations create the foundation to curriculum and are used to scaffold children’s thinking about their world.
Documentation
We strongly believe that documentation of children’s ideas and work is a useful tool to scaffold and assess children’s learning, use for teacher planning, inform parents, better understand children’s processes, make children’s learning visible and to show that children’s ideas and work are taken seriously. Documentation is used primarily in three ways in our classroom: daily documentation, portfolio documentation and project work documentation. Daily documentation, which highlights current projects and activities that children have been engaged in during the day, is posted each day in our classroom and online. Portfolio documentation highlights student’s work and demonstrates a child’s development. We value children’s work and make a point to display it in aesthetically pleasing ways to honor their learning and make it visible to parents and visitors.

Other Influences
In addition to the Reggio Emilia approach, other various best practices have influenced our program including research by Dr. Mel Levine, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget and John Dewey. By integrating these researched methods and concepts in early childhood education, we strongly believe that our program supports the child in all areas of development and lays an exceptional foundation for them to become life-long learners.

First Year and Second Year Programs
Our program is designed to prepare children ages three to five for Kindergarten over a two year progression. We have created a division in our program to developmentally and appropriately support our first and second year children within our multiage classroom. During Morning Meeting and Focused Exploration (about two hours of our morning) we split our class into two smaller groups, the “first-years” (our youngest children) and the “second years” (our oldest children).

These groups are based on age and development so that children are supported in a learning environment that is best suited for their developmental needs. We recommend that children in their first year attend school either 2 or 3 days a week (Tuesday/Thursday or Monday/Wednesday/Friday) and that children in their second year attend school either 3 or 5 days a week. Our first year program provides our youngest children with a more intimate setting to support their adjustment to school and foster new relationships with their peers. Throughout the first year a lot of time is spent on supporting children’s social/emotional development. In addition, during this year we strive to provide children with numerous opportunities and exposure to new materials and experiences to acquire and strengthen cognitive, language and physical development.

During the second year we provide children with more specific opportunities and challenges to acquire the skills needed for Kindergarten. Throughout the day and in the classroom our oldest children are given opportunities to take on leadership, voice their ideas, test their theories and practice important skills through meaningful play. Separating our class into two groups allows for more focused work with each age group and ensures that children will be challenged appropriately, however this is only one-third of day, the other two-thirds of our day continues to be experienced as a whole group—as we value the experiences that children of all ages find together and the natural opportunities that arise for children to support one another in their learning. Our program provides an optimal balance of a multiage classroom and age based curriculum to support a child’s growth.
### Schedule of the Day

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday - Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:15-8:30 AM</td>
<td>Settling-In</td>
<td>Settling-In</td>
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<td>8:30-8:45 AM</td>
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<td>8:45-9:00 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:15 AM</td>
<td>Morning Meeting</td>
<td>Morning Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15-9:30 AM</td>
<td>Focused Exploration</td>
<td>Focused Exploration</td>
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<td>9:30-9:45 AM</td>
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<td>11:00-11:15 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15-11:30 AM</td>
<td>Reflection Meeting *</td>
<td>Reflection Meeting</td>
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<td>11:30-11:45 AM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>11:45-12:00 AM</td>
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<td>Community Lunch in the Dining Lodge</td>
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<td>12:00-12:15 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15-12:30 PM</td>
<td>Outdoor Exploration</td>
<td>Physical Education &amp; Outdoor Exploration</td>
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<td>12:30-12:45 PM</td>
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<td>1:00-1:15 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:15-1:30 PM</td>
<td>Rest &amp; Relaxation</td>
<td>Rest &amp; Relaxation</td>
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<td>1:30-1:45 PM</td>
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<td>2:00-2:15 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-2:30 PM</td>
<td>Story &amp; Snack</td>
<td>Story &amp; Snack</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30-2:45 PM</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
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* In Spanish twice a week
Curriculum

Emergent Curriculum and Project Work
“Curriculum is not established in advance. Curriculum emerges in the process of each activity or project and is flexibly adjusted accordingly.” - Lella Gandini, author of several books on the Reggio Emilia approach

Creative pedagogical methods influence our student-driven curriculum. Project-based investigations are based on children’s interests and evolve from observations that teachers collect throughout play. Project work integrates all areas of development; the developmental constructs of social-emotional, language, cognitive and physical are used to guide long and short-term projects. Throughout all projects, short or long, teachers facilitate opportunities that challenge children academically and socially, incorporating activities that strengthen all areas of development.

It is common in our classroom to see teachers observing children’s play and taking notes. We use these observations to formulate ideas about children’s interests. Teachers meet daily to talk about emerging interests and plan curriculum that is aligned with students’ current pursuits. Projects allow us to challenge students individually and appropriately support their development—cognitive, language, social/emotional and physical—as well as engage them in the learning process. We believe that curriculum derived from students’ curiosities is more meaningful and allows them to become more motivated to learn, to write, to make meaning of their world and problem-solve.

Literacy
Children are provided with a supportive learning environment in which they have access to a wide variety of resources that actively build language and conceptual development. The classroom exposes children to fundamental concepts in reading and writing. Literacy is fostered to meet individual needs and interests. Morning message, the sign-in sheet, daily news book and read-aloud serve as examples of ways in which all children experience spoken and written language throughout the day.

Play presents continuous opportunities for writing. Children express and use writing in meaningful ways with materials that are dispersed around the classroom. Signs in the block area, letters to friends, restaurant menus and orders, traffic tickets, personal stories and illustrations are ways in which writing may occur during play.

Numeracy
Children are exposed to math and numbers in meaningful ways through our environment and play. Numbers, counting, gathering data and highlighting part-to-whole are incorporated during morning meeting discussions, block building, cooking and various play schemes. Block building provides opportunities for learning fractions, measurement, order, patterns and symmetry. Cooking projects and preparing snack allow for measuring and counting. Materials at the sensory table are available for experimenting with volume. A child may be curious about volume while playing with containers at the sensory table. Opportunities for learning mathematical concepts are encouraged throughout play.
Fine Arts
“The studio is not an isolated place where artistic things happen. It is a laboratory for thinking.” – Loris Malaguzzi
The studio is central to our program, and the Reggio Emilia philosophy, to support children’s learning, development and creativity. “In Reggio they believe that the child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts, a hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking…” In our classroom, the studio is a place where children are able to express themselves through many different “languages”: clay, watercolor, drawing, painting, wire, collage, pastels, weaving, and more. It is a place where children are invited to think deeply about their ideas and make them come to life. The Journeys School Fine Arts Coordinator collaborates with classroom teachers to support children’s interests and provide appropriate materials for their explorations.

Science
Through play, children are exposed to foundational science concepts. Experimentation, the scientific method and cause-and-effect relationships are at work every day in the classroom. Children are encouraged to try out their ideas and make new hypotheses based on results.

Social Skills
Children have opportunities to listen to and share stories, ideas, feelings and thoughts with their peers on a daily basis. By exploring social relationships, manipulating objects, and interacting with people, children are able to formulate and try their ideas. Through group play children encounter natural conflict with their peers. Problem solving is the foundation of a young child’s learning and is valued in our early childhood classroom. Children develop socially and emotionally through learning to communicate how they feel, think of solutions and follow through with a plan. Children are guided by peers and teachers to learn problem-solving techniques that foster successful social interactions.

Music
“Since the beginning of time, children have not liked to study. They would much rather play, and if you have their interests at heart, you will let them learn while they play; they will find that what they have mastered is child’s play.” – Carl Orff, of Carl Orff Schluwerk Music and Dance Education
Music is ritually integrated throughout the day in the Pre-Kindergarten. Songs begin each meeting and supplement our festivities throughout the year. Focus is on exposure to various percussion instruments and exercises to help students develop hand-eye coordination and right/left brain coordination. Children are encouraged to use their voice, move their bodies, keep a beat and play with music in an exploratory manner.

Second Language Learning
Students are introduced to Spanish with immersion experiences in the classroom and age-appropriate activities such as songs and daily rituals. The earlier children begin learning language the more natural and fluid the process becomes. Learning a second language leaves the students with more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language and a better ear for listening. It also improves a child’s understanding of his/her native language. Students explore Spanish languages and cultures through art, crafts, games, songs and stories that connect to other areas of studies. Lessons stem from students’ natural curiosity and playfulness with language. While a Spanish teacher introduces new materials, classroom teachers reinforce vocabulary throughout the day, removing the “foreign” label from the new language.

Outdoor Exploration and Physical Education
Outdoor Exploration is an important part of our day and our philosophy. Based on Richard Louv’s book, Last Child in the Woods, Outdoor Exploration is a time for “free-range play” in the natural world. For one hour each day, children are supervised outdoors on the hills of our campus. Boundaries are set and teachers support play and facilitate conflicts. Major goals of this time spent outdoors are to allow children to feel comfortable in the natural world, to become familiar with their local surroundings, and to encourage creative play.
In addition to Outdoor Exploration, students participate in Physical Education, taught by a specialist, once per week on most weeks. The Pre-Kindergarten program utilizes the early childhood SPARK curriculum (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids). SPARK is the most highly researched P.E. curriculum in the world and has been praised by the Center for Disease Control, the Surgeon General, and the National Academy of Sciences. Key components of the curriculum include 1) providing enough equipment for every student, 2) inclusive activities that never eliminate students, and 3) moderate to vigorous physical activity throughout each lesson. Students practice locomotor skills (skipping, galloping, running, etc.) and non-locomotor skills (bending, twisting, squatting, etc.). Students also work with manipulatives such as beanbags, scarves, hula hoops, and streamers. Emphasis is on creativity and individual mastery of basic movement patterns. Competitive activities are not used in Pre-Kindergarten. Dance and gymnastics with local organizations augment the SPARK curriculum.

**Journeys**

Journeys are designed to enhance curriculum in the classroom while giving students the opportunity to explore their community. We are committed to making frequent journeys to explore the natural world and community resources that are available in Jackson Hole. Focusing on the children’s interests and projects that are happening in the classroom, journeys incorporate travel to surrounding areas such as Grand Teton National Park, Conservation Research Center, Center for the Arts, Teton County Library and more.

**Parent Involvement**

We believe that children, families, teachers, parents and communities are interactive and work together to create, share, learn, grow, inspire, and encourage. Parent involvement holds significant weight in early childhood education.

“A true community is a place where collaboration, caring and conflict go hand in hand. This sense of community becomes the envelope around the important interactions that occur within each classroom and school. The assumption is that children from the very beginning are active contributors to the life of a community. The child’s self-identity is constructed out of a relationship formed with people, things, and the environment, without the group the child could not find or develop an identity.” - Loris Malaguzzi, from Reggio Emilia Schools in Italy

Parents and teachers work collaboratively as a unified governess to supplement the child’s obstacles, learning and growth. Our open-door policy and Parent Committees allow for parents to be involved in varying capacities. Parent Committees are formed at the beginning of the school year and support the children and teaching team by helping to schedule holidays and events, hands-on help during the school day or classroom preparation help that can be done from home.

**Advisory and Learning Team Meetings**

Each family is assigned an advisor who acts as a point-person for each child and Journeys School. Learning Team Meetings are scheduled three times throughout the year and consist of one teacher and the parents. The learning team gathers to discuss goals, review the child’s progress, assess current skills and knowledge, and plan ways in which to further support the child’s learning and interests.

**Behavior and Guidance Philosophy**

A caring environment built on trust, security and respect is necessary in order to manage a classroom. Having a well-organized environment, offering stimulating explorations, and implementing age-appropriate activities keep negative behaviors to a minimum. Faculty guide student behavior to encourage student autonomy and conflict resolution. Children are encouraged with methods to verbally express their feelings to peers and teachers. Behavioral issues that arise in the Pre-Kindergarten present a myriad of learning opportunities for the children. A critical component to life at Journeys Pre-Kindergarten includes working within a group and problem-solving when challenges arise. Teachers facilitate this process by having the child share his/her feelings regarding the situation and giving the other child an opportunity to “solve” the situation or help the child “feel better.” By providing guidance, rather than discipline, we promote life skills in problem-solving that foster empathy and compassion as the child grows and develops.
Admissions
Journeys School does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, color, ethnic, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid programs, or any other school administered programs. Admission decisions by the Admissions Committee are based on:

1) available space and the makeup of the particular grade level;
2) previous student performance, effort, ability, community involvement, attendance;
3) whether Journeys School has an appropriate program to meet the student's needs;
4) parent support of the Journeys School program, philosophy, mission and its faculty/administration.

Priority is given to siblings of current students and students with a Teton Science Schools relationship.

The Admissions Director and/or faculty will meet with interested applicants. We expect that the parents and the student visit the school, preferably when school is in session, and that the decision to enroll is a joint and mutual decision between parent and child. Records of each applicant's past educational experiences and teacher recommendations are requested to better assess the developmental level of the student. Once a student has been accepted, signing an enrollment agreement and making a tuition deposit finalizes enrollment and guarantees a student's place at Journeys School.

Faculty
Nate McClennen (Head of School) 307-734-9850
Tammie Van Holland (Director of Admissions) 307-734-3710
Betsy Trowbridge (Faculty, Elementary Curriculum Coordinator) 307-734-9863
Erin Smith (Pre-Kindergarten Lead Faculty) 307-734-9874
Jessica Barksdale (Pre-Kindergarten Lead Faculty) 307-734-9867
Paige Byron (Pre-Kindergarten Faculty) 307-734-9842
Andy Angstrom (Pre-Kindergarten Faculty) 307-734-9873
Emmy Kean (Pre-Kindergarten and Afterschool Faculty) 307-732-7763
Kjera Strom Henrie (Faculty, PK-5 Spanish Coordinator) 307-734-9852
Brooke Littman (Faculty, PK-12 Fine Arts Coordinator) 307-734-9879
John Gillum (Faculty, PK-12 Physical Education/Athletics Coordinator) 307-734-9844
Travis Gay (Faculty, PK-12 Learning Needs Coordinator) 307-734-9858

All requests for information can be directed to admissions@journeysschool.org or 307-734-3710. More information can be found at www.journeysschool.org.