



Amiguitos!

preschool

school

PARENT HANDBOOK

**5101 SE Aldercrest Rd.
Milwaukie, OR 97222
503 653 4081**

**11675 SW Butner Rd.
Portland, OR 97225
503-596-2661**

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WELCOME TO AMIGUITOS!

¡Bienvenidos!

We are so happy you've decided to enroll your child with us and we hope that we exceed your expectations for a rich, early development educational experience in a Spanish Immersion environment.

In order for our school to operate efficiently, in accordance with local safety and health standards and in fairness to over 100 families participating in Amiguitos!, we have put together this Parent Handbook and ask that you review it very carefully, within the first week of your child's enrollment.

There is much to learn and much to remember within these pages! We encourage parents to use this as a reference manual and to review its contents every 6 months or so.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at any time with questions you may have or with suggestions. We've grown so much in the past few years and we strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence for all our children.

Most Sincerely,

Aydé Manzano de York

Aydé Manzano de York
Directora

INTRODUCTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of Amiguitos Preschool is to provide a safe, comfortable and loving environment rich in the Spanish language, spoken by qualified native speakers to enhance the cognitive, social and emotional development of our students.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner has spent many years analyzing the human brain function and its impact on education, including language learning. He says that there are several types of intelligence and these "Multiple Intelligences" can be linked to teaching a second language. Based on Gardner's principles, Amiguitos! believes that

- Children learn by doing

- Language sounds should be reinforced with pictures and real objects

- Learning should be fun

- Learning is best when a child is relaxed and comfortable

- Dancing and moving to rhythm when learning a second language is important

- Children learn by touching, tasting and smelling

- Some children learn by reflecting

We at Amiguitos Preschool believe in an integrated program that involves your children, the parents and our staff. Our philosophy incorporates open communication between staff and parents in a safe and stimulating environment that enriches the children through these important first years.

Parents may visit Amiguitos! at any time. The Latin culture is family-oriented and this idea extends to the school. We encourage you to join us during field trips and to celebrate special holidays with us. We will not only celebrate American, but Mexican holidays as well. You will have the opportunity to participate in some cultural events and your ideas and comments are always welcomed. Parental education is important, and we encourage you to ask questions regarding your child's activity, nutrition, growth and development.

Our goal is to provide a nurturing environment where children can grow and develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Children learn through their play and age-appropriate activities. Each child is an individual and needs to be treated as such. They come to us in all shapes and sizes and at all stages of development. Amiguitos Preschool staff will guide them through these stages and build upon them. We will be looking for large and small motor development, coordination, interaction with peers and communicating in the physical domain and assisting with language and cognitive development.

We will provide all of the children a clean, safe, comfortable, and loving environment, where they can play and learn. Respect toward self, others and the environment will be emphasized. We believe in the value of both structured and flexible schedules. Structured activities will include the use of a preschool curriculum, regular reading times, arts and crafts, music, and computer time (for older children). Outdoor play, free play, and choice of multiple art activities are some of

the child directed activities we have. The most important priority is to have FUN!

The development and training of staff is a continuous process, which includes attending workshops and constructive supervision and feedback. The staff is required to take at least 15 hours each year of classes related to child development. Each site has a Director, qualified teachers and aides.

Amiguitos! School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to student at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies and other school-administered programs.

CURRICULUM

Amiguitos has monthly themes that target specific vocabulary. However the children are 100% immersed in Spanish while at school and acquire social language at their own pace depending on how much time they spend in school. Curriculum description is available upon request.

OUR DAYS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

Calendar and circle time: The children learn vocabulary through songs and fun activities.

Vamos a jugar (Free play): Dressing up, "building towers", playing games, "taking care of babies", are all activities through which the children acquire Spanish.

Vamos a leer un cuento (Story time): Age and theme appropriate books are read to the children every day.

Bocadillos (Snack time): We provide a healthy snack daily

Recreo (Outdoor playtime): Playing outdoors is a daily activity that promotes gross-motor development and social skills

Artes (Art): Fine-motor development is fostered by providing an array of fun materials: play dough, paint, cutting and pasting, beads, etc.

¡Adiós! (Goodbye!): We end the day with a song.

OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

We open our doors at 8:00 and close at 5:30 Monday through Friday. If we are unavailable, please leave a message on our answering machine and we will return a call as soon as we can the next business day.

EASTSIDE: (503) 653-4081 Email our office at: informacionamiguitos@comcast.net

WESTSIDE: (503) 596-2661 Email our office at: information@amiguitos.comcastbiz.net

Our Director, Aydé York may also be reached at any time on her cell phone at (503) 720-6457 or by email at: aydemyork@comcast.net

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

ADMISSION PAPERWORK

When enrolling your child in Amiguitos! The following forms must be completed:

1. Registration form
2. Parent Authorization
3. Registration and Fee payment agreement
4. Getting to know you
5. Are you Ready?
6. Certificate of Immunizations

REGISTRATION AND MATERIALS

The \$150 fee is charged when the parents decide to enroll their child. It is charged every year. New students starting in March through May only pay a \$50 fee but then \$150 for the following year. If a new student starts in June then no fee is paid for that month but then \$150 for the fall.

Waiting List: *If school is full and parents want to be on a waiting list, they must fill out a Registration Form.*

*When a place becomes available, parents have 48 hours to make the **registration payment**. If we do not hear from the parents, we will call the next person on the waiting list.*

TUITION

Tuition rates are based on amount of days per week your child attends and the program they are enrolled. Tuition may be paid in full prior to start of the school year with a 3% discount. Tuition is divided into 10 equal payments and paid monthly. Payments are due on the 15th of each month, **prior** to the month of attendance. If tuition is not paid by the 20th day of the month, a late fee of \$20 will be charged. NO EXCEPTIONS.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

We provide a 15% sibling discount for the lower priced sibling attending Amiguitos!

RETURNED CHECKS

We will charge a \$15 fee for returned checks plus a late fee of \$20.

IF NO TUITION IS PAID

Enrollment will be canceled, if tuition payment is not received within 10 (10) days of due date.

ENROLLMENT DECREASE

Enrolled families are required to give a written, 30-day advance notice prior to decreasing enrollment or withdrawing from Amiguitos! Withdrawal in April, May, or June requires payment of the rest of the school year.

Amiguitos! offers no refunds. Full tuition is due regardless of child illness, scheduled and unscheduled school closures, holidays, vacations, or staff illness.

RECEIPTS

If you need receipts, please ask our receptionist for one of the following options:

- Monthly receipts
- Receipt for January through June
- Receipt for September through December
- Receipt for summer camps

We are sorry but cannot issue receipts for January through December due to tuition changes in September and our school does not work by calendar year. We appreciate your understanding.

STUDENT RECORDS

Student records are kept at the school. Written evaluations and notes from parent/teachers are part of student's records. Parents have the right to review their child's records. With a signed release of information, we are pleased to send relevant records to other schools and centers. Records will not be released if there is any outstanding monetary balance unpaid.

SCHEDULES

SCHOOL CALENDAR

We do NOT follow the public school calendar. School Calendars may be accessed on our website at www.amiguitos.org.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

If we have ice or snow or another emergency requiring our school to be closed, you will receive an email message by 7 AM. Please check your messages. You can also check our page in Facebook or call our Director's cell phone (Aydé) 503-720-6457. We do NOT go by school district closures.

EASTSIDE AND WESTSIDE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES:

Authorized adults must sign children in and out upon dropping off and picking them up from school. This is done using the sign in/out form at the reception desk.

Please be sure your child has a healthy breakfast and uses the bathroom before they are dropped off at school. If an adult other than you is going to pick up your child, notify us through a note, phone call or in person. If that person has not yet signed the authorization section of the registration form, please have them come to the reception desk to do so before picking up the child. They must show a driver's license and sign the authorization form.

EASTSIDE AND WESTSIDE LATE PICK UP:

If you will be late picking up your child, please call us. If your child is picked up between 16 and 30 minutes after designated pick up time, you will be charged a fee of \$10. If your child is picked up between 31 and 60 minutes after designated pick up time, you will be charged a fee of \$30. If you are more than 30 minutes late at the end of the day, and we are unable to reach you or your emergency contact, we will call Child Protective Services and you will be charged \$30.

You may request to have your child stay later than their normal pick up time up to 5:30pm. Requests are considered on an individual basis and will be accommodated based on availability and Teacher/Student ratios. 24 hour notice is appreciated. If staying through lunch, parents must provide a healthy lunch for their child. Up to the first hour is \$12 and half hour increments after that is \$6 per 30 minutes.

MEDIA POLICY

At this time Oregon state law allows childcare children to watch up to 2 full hours of television or other electronic screen time per day. We believe that there are many other forms of entertainment and children will never watch television while at Amiguitos Preschool.

Children under the age of 4 will not have any screen time (TV, videos, computer time) while at Amiguitos. Children in our Pre-K and Kindergarten group will have limited computer access related to instructional reading and math goals only. Screen time will not exceed more than 30 minutes in one day.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCE

In order to keep you updated about your child's progress, conferences will be mid school year. Conferences are 30 minutes in length. If you need to talk to your child's teacher or the Director at another time, please contact our office assistant to make an appointment.

QUIET TIME EASTSIDE AND WESTSIDE

Families supply blanket and crib size sheet for quiet time (small pillow with case optional). Items are to be brought to school on the first day of the week. At a minimum, quiet time items are to be brought home to be laundered every Friday for those who attend school 5 days a week and every 2 weeks for those attending 2-3 days a week.

LIBRARY CHECKOUT

The more Spanish children hear and practice, the better it is for them. If the children can hear language in a context that is familiar to them, they learn faster because the input is comprehensible. That is why Amiguitos! offers books in Spanish that you can take home.

Please check books out with the office assistant after drop off or before pick up. Once the books previously checked out are returned, you can check out different ones. If you damage a book, you need to replace it.

NOTE: Public libraries have books and tapes in Spanish and you can find flash cards, games and books in Spanish at the Learning Palace, Powell's and Barnes & Noble.

FIELD TRIPS

Amiguitos! Schedules two field trips a year. Please check our calendar for dates.

- ❑ Amiguitos! pays for the students.
- ❑ Parents and siblings pay for their own admission.
- ❑ Remember that we rely on you for transportation.
- ❑ Flyers with pertinent information will be emailed and posted a week or two before the field trip.

TRANSPORTATION

Amiguitos! has no transportation available at this time. Parents are responsible for the safe transportation of their children.

ENVIRONMENT

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Learning self-control is part of growing up. We know that all children occasionally misbehave and the staff at Amiguitos! is prepared to do the following:

Always use eye contact when talking to a child in a firm but kind manner.

Use simple and clear expectations and limits.

Re-direct the child to a more appropriate activity when needed.

Problem solve in an age appropriate way with the child to help them learn to make better choices. If the child continues to misbehave, the child will be removed from the situation and invited to go to the "Cálmate" (cool-off) area. The child will not be lectured, though he/she will be told that the behavior is not acceptable.

CÁLMATE

It's an area in the same room or close by to where the teacher and other children are playing. The child can sit down and look at a book or just think until s(he) is *lista(o)* (ready) to adjust her/his behavior and join the group.

Amiguitos staff will never use verbal abuse or corporal punishment, deny food or drink to a child for punishment, punish a child for soiling or wetting clothes, or use physical restraint.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Children in full day care will engage in at least 60 minutes of structured/unstructured physical activity daily. Children will not be sedentary for more than 30 minutes at a time except when sleeping. Amiguitos staff will interact with the children during physical activities to encourage active exploration of their environment and utilize their creativity and imagination.

DRESS CODE

The daily activities at Amiguitos! include dancing, painting, eating and playing outdoors, so your child should wear comfortable, **washable** clothes. Clothes can be any color, solid color. No

graphics, lines or print of any kind or size. Amiguitos t-shirts are fine as long as they do not have any other graphics than the logo.

We ask that the children take their shoes off when they enter the school. They **must wear socks** (solid color only) to avoid minor injuries and meet health codes. No flip flops allowed at any time.

Accidents occur... so please **bring and maintain a complete change of dress code applicable clothes** (underwear, socks, top and pants) that fit your child, **put them in a plastic bag and write your child's name on it**. This bag will stay in your child's cubby all year and needs to be replaced immediately if it is used for an accident.

****All personal items in your child's cubby need to be labeled with your child's name including Jackets, sweaters, hats, mittens, boots, etc.**

LOST AND FOUND

Amiguitos! has a "lost and found" area designated in the front entry area, in the cubbies under the fish tank. Twice each school year we clear this area, so please check there first if something is missing. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND TOYS

We know that children love to share a new or favorite toy. However, we ask that your child keep them at home for fear of loss or breakage. Please do not send toys or other personal belongings to school with your child. All personal items (such as extra clothing, outerwear) should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

You can visit Amiguitos! Preschool anytime.

The Latin culture is family oriented and this idea extends to school.

We encourage you to join us during field trips.

We encourage parents to celebrate special holidays with us. We will not only celebrate American, but Mexican holidays as well. You will be asked to participate in some cultural events and your ideas and comments are always welcomed.

If you have talents and skills that you would like to share with us, please let us know. You don't have to speak Spanish to share. We will provide the translation! In June to help with our occupations curriculum, we would love to have you come into class to talk about your profession.

Occasionally, we will ask for your help with special projects and we always welcome help in our office. Please let the office assistant know if you have any time to help.

To keep you informed of our activities, we will have a monthly newsletter or you can **visit our website for updates and news at www.amiguitos.org**.

FEEDBACK

We always welcome your observations, ideas and concerns about the school. To provide feedback, please contact Ayd  the Director at 503-720-6457 or email at aydemyork@comcast.net.

EL BOSQUE- EASTSIDE

El Bosque Amiguitos! (wooded nature trails) is for all the students to enjoy. We teach the children that we can enjoy nature but we must respect it. We show them pictures and talk about what we can and cannot do in the *Bosque*. We take the children there when the weather is good.

The students and their parents are invited to enjoy it after school. However, we must ask you to **supervise your children at all times**. We cannot be responsible for your children once you have signed them out. Please make sure the children:

- Enjoy looking at the flowers without cutting them
- Can touch rocks but do not throw them in the pond or anywhere else
- Are careful climbing the tree house
- Use the suspension bridge safely
- Keep the *Bosque* garbage free

We appreciate your support and understanding!

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Our school is a smoke-free environment. Thank you for not smoking in or around our school.

HEALTHY EATING

According to the Food and Action Research Center, a nutritious breakfast helps children in a variety of ways, including academic performance, ability to learn, decreased behavioral problems and lower instances of childhood obesity. We believe nutrition and healthy eating habits are fundamental skills for young children, and we play an important role in helping your child learn about and enjoy a variety of nutritious foods each day. When packing your child's lunch, please be sure to include a serving from each of the following food groups: fluid milk, fruits, vegetables, breads and grains; meat, fish, poultry or meat alternatives (dried beans, peanut butter, yogurt, cheese).

MEALTIME ENVIRONMENT

- a) Whenever possible, staff members will dine with the children to encourage them to eat a variety of food and observe table manners.
- b) Food will not be used as a basis for discipline, reward or incentive.
- c) Children will be encouraged, but never forced, to eat.

SNACKS

We provide the Children a snack at 11am and 3:00 PM. The snack consists of 4 oz. of 100% juice, whole milk or water, fresh fruit and cheese crackers or pretzels. **If your child has a food allergy, please make sure you let us know.**

BIRTHDAYS

On the last Thursday/Friday of the month, we celebrate the birthdays of all students born that month. Parents who want to bring treats can communicate it to the receptionist who will gladly organize that event. Please send enough treats for every child. Healthier treats are preferred NO CUPCAKES PLEASE. Please make sure you include an ingredients list for anything brought to the school in consideration of those who have food sensitivities and limitations.

Some suggestions are as follows:

Cheese	Pirate Booty	Fruit Roll-ups
Graham crackers	Pre-popped Popcorn	Fruit cups
Oatmeal cookies	Cut Vegetables	Rice cakes
Raisins	Fresh Fruit	Carrot Sticks

If you have party invitations for a few children, please be kind enough to **mail or email them** or distribute them yourselves. **Teachers and office assistants cannot be asked to do it.** Emails of classmates are available on class rosters.

MEDICATION

If a child requires medication to be administered while at school, the child's parent and doctor must complete appropriate medical forms (see the office assistant for forms). Medication must be in original containers and provided by parents. School staff will only administer non-prescription medications with written consent from a doctor. All medication will be kept in a locked container in the reception area.

We will only administer dated, labeled, prescribed medication or physician-prescribed, pharmacy-labeled over-the counter medications if it is necessary.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Oregon Law requires every child in a school to have up to date shots unless he/she has a medical or religious exemption. The forms must be filled out and submitted by the second week of attendance.

HAND WASHING

We will ask your child to wash hands before eating and after bathroom visits. Please remind them at home that this will be requested from them.

ILLNESS

We exclude ill children from the school when the presence of the child risks spreading an infection to the other children and when the ill child requires more attention and care than is available by the regularly scheduled staff.

FEVER: ANY fever greater than 100.5 F. Child may return when temperature is below 100. without use of fever-reducing medicine.

VOMITTING: At least 1 episode that is unexplained in the past 24 hours. May return when resolved.

DIARRHEA: 3 or more watery or loose stools in 24 hours OR sudden onset of loose stools. May

return when resolved for 24 hours.

STIFF NECK: or headache with accompanying fever. May return after resolution of symptoms or diagnosis made and medical clearance given.

RASHES: ANY new onset of rash if accompanied by fever; may return after rash resolves or if medical clearance given.

SKIN LESIONS: Drainage that cannot be contained within a bandage OR if rash is increasing in size, or if new sores or wounds are developing day-to-day.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE: Such as new onset of irritability, lethargy or somnolence.

COUGH/SOB: Persistent cough with or without fever, serious sustained coughing, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing. Complaints that prevent the student from active participation in usual school activities, or student requiring more care than the school staff can safely provide.

We have a NO NIT policy. Children with lice or nits will be asked to leave upon detection, and may not return until they are nit free.

Your child must be symptom-free for 24 hours without the aid of pain or fever reducers prior to re-admittance to school or cleared by a licensed health care provider

PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL BEFORE 8:30 A.M. IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ATTENDING AMIGUITOS! FOR THE DAY

Please call if your child has a communicable illness or infestation, such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis, pinworms, Fifth's disease, mites or head lice so we can exercise additional control methods and notify other parents. Your child's identity is protected.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

ACCIDENTS

We try to make school safe at all times, but children are children and accidents may happen. If they occur and we feel medical attention is needed, we will call you first, emergency contact next.

EMERGENCY PLANS

Amiguitos! has extensive plans and procedures in place for emergency situations such as medical emergencies, natural disasters, and other threatening situations. Our Crisis handbook is available upon request.

DRILLS

We have regular practice drills at Amiguitos! so that the children know how to act in a safe and orderly manner should a fire, earthquake, or other emergency occur.

STAFF

TRAINING

All staff meet the training requirements mandated by the Oregon State Child Care Division. The directors and teaching staff participate in at least 15 clock hours of training or education related to child care.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

All Amiguitos! staff has training in the prevention and identification of child abuse. Any employee who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect is mandated by the State of Oregon to report their suspicions to the appropriate authority following our policy and procedure guidelines.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE MY CHILD'S NEW LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE MORE SUCCESSFUL?

Tell your children how proud you are that they are learning Spanish.

Do not expect your child to start speaking Spanish the first few days, and do not try to force her/him to do so. Each child will be ready to use Spanish in her/his own individual pace.

Never force, but do encourage the use of Spanish at home. If children see that the parents value the Spanish language, they will have a positive attitude toward using it.

Please **avoid** asking your children to translate; they are too young to understand this concept.

Avoid comparing your child's progress to that of other children.

If your child seems anxious or nervous at the beginning, be understanding. Immersion is a new experience and the children need time to adjust. However, if the anxiety continues, please discuss it with us. By the end of September all children should be adjusted to the routines and their new language environment.

The Latino community in Oregon is growing. If you have opportunities to expose your child to the language and culture, do so!

Encourage your child to teach you Spanish! Most children love to play "teacher" with their parents and siblings. And this is a great idea since we remember best what we teach!