



Turn Back Time

PARENT HANDBOOK

TURN BACK TIME CAMP

www.facebook.com/turnbacktimeinc

lisab@tbtinc.org



Table of Contents

Section

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Welcome</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>About Our Program and Director</i> | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| <i>Philosophy and Mission</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>Life on the Farm</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>Tuition</i> | <i>5</i> |
| <i>Arrival and Departure</i> | <i>6</i> |
| <i>Health and Wellness</i> | <i>7</i> |
| <i>Safety Guidelines in High Risk Play</i> | <i>8</i> |
| <i>Weather Policy & Clothing Preparedness</i> | <i>9</i> |
| <i>Resources</i> | <i>10</i> |

Welcome

Dear Farm School Families,

We are very excited that you and your family are going to be part of our Farm School programming! We hope this handbook provides you with the information you need to have a successful experience here. Please feel free to contact us with questions or concerns throughout the school year. We are very much looking forward to this opportunity of working with your child and getting to know you and your family over the course of the coming school year.

We offer year-long camp options for preschool and kindergarten age children here at Turn Back Time. These classes are for children ages 3 to 6 years old. School year programs are scheduled Monday through Thursday from September to June, with hours varying depending on the program. These programs are based on the principles of a Forest Kindergarten/Nature Preschool model, which is a child directed program that runs primarily outdoors.

Turn Back Time also offers seasonal programming for Homeschool and After School groups (Critter Catchers). These programs may be supplementary to other schooling, whether it be homeschool or public.

Student's activities are centered on nature exploration, farm education and play. Our program is primarily an outdoor program; however we do have an indoor space when weather conditions are unsafe.

Discounts apply for sibling enrolled in the SAME program discount of 12.5%.

Welcome Aboard!

Lisa Burris

**Turn Back Time, Inc. 250 Marshall St, Paxton, MA 01612
978- 760-3707**

www.tbtime.org
www.facebook.com/turnbacktimeinc lisab@tbtime.org

Getting to Know our Program and it's Director

Lisa Burris, Executive Director.

Elizabeth “Lisa” Burris is the visionary behind Turn Back Time in Paxton, Massachusetts, a small nonprofit organization with a mission to help individuals recognize nature’s ability to teach and heal while fostering a connection to nature and their innate (unique) brilliance.

Lisa and her husband, Jim, have raised 6 children, 3 of whom came to their family through a foster and adopt placement. All 3 have special needs. It was through her children that Lisa first recognized the fantastic effects that nature has as a great equalizer and healer, inspiring her to begin Turn Back Time (TBT), a nature-based education program for children of all abilities. Lisa felt it was her calling to create a space for children to activate their potential within a natural environment, as she had witnessed of her own children. The Burris family bought a farm in 2011 and began nature-based and place-based programming in 2012, with just a few preschool children and a red shed! By 2021 the program had expanded in programming and infrastructure, providing preschool classes, a kindergarten program, school-age enrichment programming, homeschool classes, after school programs and a booming summer camp program in a large barn, outdoor classrooms and yurts.

TBT has a goal of hosting as many under resourced individuals as possible. They achieve this goal with integrated programming and by hosting several agencies that work with youth and young adults in residential therapeutic settings. TBT also works in collaboration with Worcester Polytechnic Institute, other area colleges and public schools, and organizations such as Scout troops and rehabilitation facilities to help create projects that create real sustainable change, not only on the farm but in the world at large, for the effects of this work ripple out in innumerable ways.

Professionally, Lisa holds a degree in Human Resources and has 30 years of experience in the field, as well as in business, administration, and accounting. After starting Turn Back Time and seeing the amazing effect nature has on children’s lives she attended Antioch University to study the pedagogies of nature-based education, place-based education and forest kindergarten; receiving a Master's Certificate in Nature-Based Education in May of 2017. Lisa has worked with children as an Applied Behavior Therapist, taught preschool and school-aged children for 8 years, and is a trained foster parent for

the state of Massachusetts. When Lisa is not working on the farm she enjoys spending time with her husband, 5 children and 4 grandchildren and is an active member in her church.

Our Team

Our staff for camp and school year programs comes from a variety of backgrounds, but all of them have a desire to allow children to be educated in a natural setting and in ways that foster independence and autonomy. Our core lead staff all hold degrees in Education or related fields. We perform CORI and SORI checks and check personal references on all of our staff.

You can find out more about our current staff on our website:

<https://tbtinc.org/our-team/>

Please read on for additional information regarding the Forest Kindergarten model and some of the components we duplicate here in our programs.

Philosophy and Mission

Finish this sentence: When I was a kid.....

Many of us would have an answer similar to “I went outside in the morning and didn’t come home until supper”. Choosing an outdoor program for your child in their preschool years will give them the opportunity to have similar childhood experiences. Unstructured nature based play is a near perfect fit with a young child’s developmental needs: Cognitive, Social/Emotional, Creative, Spiritual and Physical.

At Turn Back Time nature is the teacher. Our mission is to help individuals recognize nature’s ability to teach and heal. We accomplish this mission through nature exploration, farm education and play.

What is Forest Kindergarten? A Forest Kindergarten is a form of early education based on the German model of Wald kindergarten or Forest Children’s Garden. Learning takes place entirely outdoors, regardless of the weather. Children are encouraged to play, explore and learn in all seasons in a natural environment with adults nearby. Adults are there to play more of a consultant’s role and try to allow children an opportunity to direct their own learning.

Our program is a nature immersion, play based program. We use the natural world to encourage imaginative play, creativity, cooperation, empathy, healthy risk taking, and cognitive and gross motor skill development.

Some of our core beliefs include:

- Play is essential to every child’s development and the basis through which children navigate the world around them.
- The natural play setting provides sensory processing opportunities for children, which is essential to development.
- Outdoor play and farm education deal with childhood obesity on a systemic level.
- Inspiration is bred in the early years. Giving children the opportunity to be inspired through open ended play will foster creative adults.
- Allowing a child to face their fear on their own terms helps them to feel empowered and to develop strength and strategies to deal with life’s stress.
- Challenges help children grow. If we as adults take away the hard things, we take away the opportunities to be brave.

Life on the Farm

We structure each day with a predictable rhythm and familiar patterns, while allowing for spontaneous learning opportunities. A typical day on the farm will include something similar to the following schedule.

9:00 a.m. Drop off at the lower garden or gate

9:10 a.m. to 9:25 a.m. Opened ended play

9:25 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Morning meeting

9:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Animal care and time in the garden

10:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Snack time

10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Forest time and theme activities

11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Lunch

12:00 p.m. to 12:40 Choice time

12:40 p.m. closing circle, backpacks and pick-up

Below you will find some of the activities we use to inspire connection and learning in our children.

- Animal Care – animals are an amazing source of learning for children. We can teach about farming, sustainability and science and biology. In addition to the academic subject matter animals provide, they also are a therapeutic influence and help to teach empathy, patience, and hard work.
- Gardening – gardening is another activity that can be used in a scientific and therapeutic way. We teach farming and biology and learn patience while we wonder at the life cycles of plants.
- Storytelling/ story acting – Stories are the ultimate form of communication. They develop language and imagination and help inspire confidence in children.
- Navigating and mapping – introduction to mapping helps improve cognitive development and sense of space.
- Animal tracking, stalking and camouflage – Animal signs and tracking help practice the fundamentals of pattern recognition that will later

translate to reading skills. This also helps children connect to their environment, teach ecological concepts, and helps them understand their place in the larger community around them.

- Sensory awareness activities – exercising our senses sharpens them. For children interpreting our senses is a learning activity in itself. Focusing on our senses relaxes us and helps us to quiet our mind and body.
- Primitive skills – skills such as fire making and shelter building create hands on activities that involve experiential problem solving and creativity. It helps build self-esteem and gives children a feeling of being at home in nature.

Tuition

As a 501C3 Turn Back Time's goal is for ALL children to have access to our programs. If you need financial assistance, please contact Lisa and discuss options for financial support.

There is a nonrefundable enrollment fee due with your application. Full tuition payments are due July 1st if you are paying 3 equal quarterly payments these are due July 1, October 15 and February 15th. If you need to withdraw your child from our program for unexpected reasons, we will make a partial prorated refund.

Please refer to your program's unique contract for current tuition rates.

Arrival / Departure

Each program has an arrival and departure time that is unique to that program, as we are currently implementing "staggered drop offs" to reduce traffic and contact flow for various day programming. We ask that you be prompt with your pickup and drop off times as our parking space is limited.

You may arrive up to 15 minutes prior to your assigned drop off time. For example, if your child's program begins at 9:00 a.m., please do not arrive before 8:45a.m. Departure time requires a prompt pick up. Meaning, if the program ends at 1:00 p.m., you are expected to be there for that time. We understand that things may happen outside of our control but ask for promptness at pick up time. If you arrive 5 minutes beyond your assigned pick-up time, you will be charged at a rate of \$1.00 per minute.

When entering the drop off area please pull as far forward as possible and over to the left. Be cautious of vehicles exiting the parking lot and make sure you are in full control of your children.

All children will be assigned a drop off and pick-up spot, either at the lower garden or at the farm gate entrance, depending on the program. You will sign in using the tablet at the entrance and then walk your child to their designated drop off spot, where their teacher will be. If you are running late or if your

child cannot attend that day, please send a message via Brightwheel to inform the teacher of their tardiness or absence.

During pickup staff will dismiss your child to you after you sign them out using the tablet.

Turn Back Time primarily follows the Wachusett Regional School District calendar for snow days, holiday, and vacation closings. In addition, you will receive a Brightwheel message for unscheduled weather-related closings.

Health and Wellness

Health Care Policy

- Our camps follow all safety and risk management guidelines set by the local, state and Federal Boards of Health, and the American Camp Association. All camps in Massachusetts must comply with regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (105 CMR 430.000).
- Every camper's safety and well-being is our chief concern. The Health Care Supervisor is on staff, there is also a Health Care Consultant on call at all times. All campers are required to have a physical examination within 24 months prior to arriving at camp. All health forms, including immunization update, must be completed and signed by a physician each year. No child may attend camp without submitting the health form.
- Turn Back Time will provide each parent a copy of our current COVID-19 policy with enrollment packets.
- **Absence Policy:** Please contact us if your child will not participate on a particular day. Unfortunately, Turn Back Time does not allow any make up days as we do not have space.
- **Care of Minor Injuries:** In the event that your child is injured during their school day a staff member will complete an injury report form and you will be notified of the incidence at pick-up time. In the case of a serious injury, parents will be notified by phone to discuss further action. If we are unable to contact a parent or guardian, then an emergency contact will be notified.
- **Medications:** Medication administered at camp should be discussed with the camp's director. We will follow Massachusetts state guidelines for medication storage and administration.
- **Food:** Please notify us if your child has any allergies. At times we may request certain groups avoid certain foods if we have a severe allergy within the group. We ask that you send healthy food and a full water bottle with your child each day.
- **Care of Campers Who Appear Mildly Ill:** Staff members are responsible for reporting any signs of illness to the Health Care Supervisor who assesses each situation. The Health Care Supervisor may administer over-the-counter medications she believes warranted if they are authorized by the parent/guardian. If the Health Care Supervisor determines the child should be transported home then the parent/guardian is contacted as soon as possible.

- **Head Lice:** Parents must notify the school if they discover that their child has head lice. If there is a confirmed case of head lice identified in our school community, all children will be screened. Students with head lice will be sent home from school and will be readmitted when they have been treated and are nit free.
- **Ticks and mosquitoes:** As a program that spends the entire day outdoors we understand the concern for tick and mosquito related illnesses. Please follow the recommended protocol to protect your family against these illnesses. Check your child for ticks EVERY SINGLE DAY, use a repellent (applied before school) and wear long sleeve shirts and pants whenever possible.
- **Suspicion of abuse:** Turn Back Time as required by law will report any suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Safety Guidelines in High Risk Play

Turn Back Time has two reasons for rules: safety and respect. Applying these two rules to any situation on the farm usually affords children the freedom to explore while keeping them free from unnecessary harm. Our philosophy is to look at dangerous environments from two points of view: risk vs hazard. A hazard is a dangerous situation that is unseen, unexpected and has no benefit, only harm. We remove all hazards as we see them and are sure to keep children out of hazardous situations whenever possible. Risk is different, risk offers benefits and a child is free to assess the situation and make decisions based on their own comfort level.

Nature play is risky but the benefits it offers children are immense. Risk is a developmental necessity and helps to develop judgement, physical ability, courage, tenacity, self-confidence and constructive failure.

Our policy on behavior is rooted in safety and respect. Turn Back Time trains all of our staff to help them be prepared to deal with any challenging behaviors. Most children who struggle with challenging behaviors have a very positive experience in our program, because nature provides a wonderful calming influence. That being said the sum of our policy on behavior is that it is a language that children use to communicate. We try to allow them the freedom to communicate and intervene only when necessary. When adult intervention is required we try to find out what the child is trying to say to help them navigate a situation and find resolution.

Behavior Policy

Weather Policy & Clothing preparedness

Weather Policy

Using Indoor Space

Turn Back Time strives to be an outdoor program for most of the year. We have designated indoor space for each classroom when being outside isn't feasible. Guidelines for when classrooms will be utilized are outlined below. We recommend downloading a weather app on your phone to monitor the "real feel" or "feels like" conditions throughout the day. The app that we use and recommend is 'Accuweather'.

Cancellation:

- Turn Back Time will cancel classes if the "feels like" or "real feel" temp will remain below 15 degrees for the entire day.
- Turn Back Time will cancel if Wachusett Regional School District cancels school due to inclement weather.

Indoor Space:

- Turn Back Time will be outdoors for the majority of the day if the "feels like" or "real feel" temperature is above 30 degrees with no rain.
- If the temperature falls below 30 degrees classes will be indoors for part of the day.
- If the temperature falls below 40 degrees and raining classes will be indoors for part of the day.

Clothing Preparedness:

Europeans claim there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing. At Turn Back Time your child's success and enjoyment are directly correlated with them being comfortable in all types of weather. Below you will find a list of supplies essential for your child to participate successfully. We recommend you ALWAYS dress your child warmer than you think they need. It is much easier to remove clothing than to add clothing they don't have. Polaryn O'Pyret is offering a 20% discount for Turn Back Time Families. An Amazon list is linked below for gear suggestions. Some of the brands we recommend are Reima, Polaryn O'Pyret, Kuling and Celavi.

Supply list for colder weather:

- Rain Pants
- Rain jacket with a hood
- Long underwear bottom and top (moisture wicking)
- Wool or fleece top
- Snow pants
- Snow jacket
- Socks (wool socks are best, no cotton socks)
- Boots (rain boots and snow boots)
- Hat (wool or fleece)
- Gloves or mittens (multiple pairs) this is a preference item and you may have to experiment a bit. We have many children who are fine with wearing thick snow mittens and other children who can't tolerate them. One thing that works well for some children is multiple pairs of thinner gloves or mittens and a hand warmer in between.
- Neck warmer or scarf

General supply list in all

weather:

- Water bottle
- Bug spray, sunscreen and Chapstick
- Change of clothes including underwear and socks.
- Closed toe shoes at all times.

Temperature Spectrum Gear Guide:

30 degrees or below

- a. hat
- b. mittens
- c. winter coat
- d. snow pants
- e. boots rated -30 (suggest Bog or Muck Boots essential!)
- f. gator or scarf
- g. hand warmer
- h. if it's raining add rain pants

40 degrees or below

- a. warm jacket and snow pants
- b. boots rated -30, no rain boots
- c. mittens
- d. if it's raining, add rain pants and a rain coat

50 degrees

- a. warm jacket
- b. mittens in your bag
- c. long pants
- d. hiking shoes or warm boots (no sneakers)
- e. raincoat or rain pants if it's raining.

60 degrees

- a. closed shoes
- b. sweatshirt and long pants
- c. raincoat and rain pants if it's raining

Resources

<http://www.childrenandnature.org/>

Free to Learn by Peter Gray

Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv

National Wildlife Federation <http://www.nwf.org/>

<http://naturalstart.org/feature-stories/flow-learning-forest-kindergarten>

http://my.chicagobotanic.org/education/youth_ed/top_five_reasons_to_choose_nature_preschool/

<http://www.polarnopyretusa.com/>

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/TRXXDB53R2TR?ref_=wl_share