

# Hazel Creek Pet Policy

Please be aware at HCM we allow animals to be in contact with the children. HCM owns cats, dogs and horses. Teachers also will bring in the occasional classroom fish, bird, gerbil, hamster or snake into the classroom as a classroom pet.

We allow the children to ride and groom the horses with your written permission. The horses are very gentle and love attention. We ask that you do not feed our horses ANY treats as they can develop bad habits from hand feeding. Big Bob, our dark brown horse is very old and can be cranky. Do not let your child pet him through the fence, he can bite. We make the children aware of the fact that regardless of how gentle a horse is, they can kick or bite.

All pets can scratch, kick or bite. We show the children how to properly handle the animals to help avoid this from happening. Children help with chores. Their chores include recycling manure and feeding the animals. We have the children wash their hands after handling the animals and teach them proper hygiene and safe handling practices.

Our horses are used as schooling horses for horseback riding lessons. We are fully insured for all of our animals and for giving lessons. We have yearly veterinary checkups for all of our animals and have their current shots on record.

We realize that there is always an increase of risk exposing children to these various animals, but feel strongly that following safe handling practices, the children will benefit greatly. Pets are used for therapy world-wide.

Anyone that is uncomfortable with having their children exposed to our animals may want to seek out other options for their child's pre-school experience.

We have created a unique farm-like setting for children in order for them to bond and care for both the plant and animal kingdom. With this philosophy we allow for the children to garden, go on extended hikes, explore the forest and wetlands and tend to the animals we own at Hazel Creek. We follow strict safety guidelines. Our Staff are all CPR certified and many on staff are Red Cross Lifeguards and professional rescuers.