



SPARROW'S NEST PLAY RHYTHM & FLOW

Rhythm & Flow Guide

What is it?

Think of the "rhythm and flow" of the day the way you might have once considered a "daily schedule." But rather than based on curriculum, this is focused on the energy of the group.

All sessions, be it one-hour lesson or a full-day, are built around the Waldorf philosophy of inhale-exhale as a method of energy engagement and flow. Periods of **inhale** indicate times where children are engaged in moments of focus and energy gathering activities. These are followed by **exhale** moments, or times of energy release.

As a guide, it is your role to monitor the energy of your group and detect when it is time to direct (or redirect) their energy. Ask yourself these simple questions:

- Does the group seem lethargic?
- Is the group bounding with energy but seems unable to channel it?
- How long have we been in a focused still activity?
- How long has it been since we inhaled/exhaled?

What follows is a sample schedule or "rhythm" for an afternoon session at Sparrow's Nest Play:

Breath	Topic	Time
inhale & exhale	Gathering Group & Game	30 min.
inhale	Sit Spots & Nature Journaling	15 min.
exhale	Free Nature Play	45 min.
inhale	Group Project	30 min.
exhale	Free Nature Play	30 min.
inhale	Mindfulness Practice	5 min.
	Friendship Circle	15 min.

Group Gathering Circle & Game

Inhale & Exhale - 30 minutes

Choices for your Gathering Circle:

- share everyone's name
- say the Peace Pledge
- review safety rules
- give an outline of the day
- read a book
- tell a story
- sing songs
- introduce a guest
- tell about today's weather
- share instruction
- give transition instructions

Sit Spots & Nature Journaling

Inhale – 15 minutes

- Guide group members to find a place where they become comfortable just being there.
- Model being in your own Sit Spot during this time, but make sure you are visible to all group members; tell stories about what you saw in your Sit Spot.
- Don't make Sit Spots a chore. Begin with small amounts of time and increase as group members increase their observation skills

Free Nature Play & Discovery Time

Exhale - 45 minutes

Resist the urge to over-program our sessions with activities. Nature itself will provide plenty of inspiration if we only step back and allow the children the space to play and wonder.

Here are a few tips:

- ask to play alongside
- let the children lead
- rotate among groups
- use this opportunity to take pictures
- note what the children are interested in for future units of study

Group Project

Inhale - 30 minutes

Projects are selected seasonally and at the guidance of the interests of the children. Use observations made during free play to offer projects like these:

- bird studies
- tree studies in different seasons
- water cycle and quality studies
- fort building
- tracking animals
- nature crafts
- outdoor safety or fire safety
- outdoor cooking lesson

Free Nature Play & Discovery Time

Exhale - 30 minutes

Allowing the children another period of free play will give them an opportunity to re-engage in any self-initiated projects that had begun at the beginning of the session. If a child seeks to go back to their Sit Spot, continue Nature Journaling, or even extend their Group Project allow them to do so. This is their time.

Mindfulness Practice

Inhale - 5 minutes

This can be a short 5-minute exercise that includes relaxation, posture, and breathing. Even used for a short duration, this will be beneficial to the flow of your day. It can include: Animal Yoga, breathing exercises or any other mindfulness routine you find useful.

Friendship Circle

Here are a few ways you can end your day in the forest:

- "Story of the Day"
- What I Learned Today
- What I Want to Learn Next Time
- Compliments YOU give each group member individually
- Gratitude Circle
- Song
- The Peace Pledge