

Chippewa Nature Center's

Nature Preschool

Registration Information



2012-2013

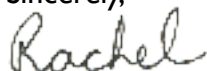
Dear Families:

Thank you for your interest in Nature Preschool! We hope you'll join us in the fall for our sixth year of this exciting and unique preschool program. Nature Preschool offers experiences typically found in child-centered programs such as discovery-based learning through play, sensory exploration, large and fine motor activities, creative expression, making friends and developing social skills. However, what's unique about this preschool is that we use the natural world as a catalyst for children's growth and development. Children have daily experiences outdoors in the play areas and on the nature center property. The children regularly hike to wooded areas, ponds, fields, and the Homestead Farm.

Based upon seasonal changes, the curriculum includes art, music, social and cognitive skill development, gross and fine motor skill development, and natural science exploration. Children will be building their knowledge through their first-hand experiences with nature, classroom materials, and their relationships with peers and adults.

Again, we hope this packet provides you with the information you need. However, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 989-631-0830 or rlarimore@chippewanaturecenter.org. We look forward to welcoming your family to our school community!

Sincerely,



Rachel Larimore
Director of Education

Mission

The mission of Nature Preschool is to provide a premier early childhood environment which meets the developmental needs of the whole child, while initiating them into a lifelong, meaningful relationship with the natural world.

Philosophy

At Nature Preschool we believe that children are intrinsically motivated to learn. The teaching staff promotes learning by:

- Providing an environment which encourages discovery, experimentation, and the opportunity to see the results of one's actions.
- Developing activities that encourage growth based on children's abilities and interests.
- Encouraging problem-solving and reflection by asking open-ended questions and providing information in response to children's ideas, insights, and concerns.
- Assisting children in their interactions with each other and offering opportunities for cooperative learning.
- Appreciating the individuality of children and families while celebrating diversity.

Curriculum

The Nature Preschool curriculum focuses on the whole child, promoting growth in physical, social, emotional and intellectual areas. Nature Preschool uses the Creative Curriculum® model which emphasizes purposeful and productive play experiences which help children grow in all areas. By the end of the year, the children will become confident, curious learners who can be part of a group, follow directions, and take turns with materials and games. Daily activities include:

- Outdoor play
- Dramatic play
- Large and small motor activities
- Cooking and food experiences
- Sensory activities
- Natural science experiences
- Art activities
- Music and movement
- Language activities
- Block play



Typical Day at Nature Preschool

We value spontaneity in activities and take advantage of the “teachable moment.” We also know that many people, especially young children first experiencing regular activity away from home, benefit from knowing what will happen next. We will maintain a loose schedule, with predictable events throughout the day such as snack and group experiences, to give children the security of structure. The following is an example of a typical classroom schedule.

Arrival

Class begins outside in one of the two play areas. The adult dropping the child will take their child to the play area (dressed for the weather) after making sure the child has used the toilet and put away the child’s backpack and extra clothes. From there the child will join the teachers outside.

Outdoor Play & Group Excursion

Children will play in the outdoor play area, and then take a hike on the Nature Center grounds. Play area activities include, water play, sand play, fort building, digging, gardening, and dramatic play. Activities on the Nature Center grounds include hiking to and playing in the forest, meadow, trails around Arbury Pond, the Sugarhouse, and the Homestead Farm.

Group Meeting

Children take part in conversation, engage in music and movement activities, listen to stories, sing songs, and participate in other whole-group activities.

Snack Time

Teachers and children eat “family style,” serve food, converse, and enjoy each other’s company. Children clean up from snack as they finish eating they may transition directly to choice time.

Choice Time

Children have at least 60 minutes of uninterrupted time to choose an activity among the different areas of the classroom. This allows children to lengthen attention spans and to develop competency with an activity. Children may choose activities that occur in any of the interest areas within the classroom including:

- Blocks
- Library
- Dramatic Play
- Art
- Toys & Games
- Discovery
- Sand & Water

Small Group

Adult-directed activities such as cooking, occur in small groups. These activities allow children the opportunity to ask more questions, and allows the teacher to evaluate each child’s needs and progress. This is an opportunity for more concentrated learning.

Ending Group Meeting

We gather on the “tree carpet” to say goodbye and recall activities from the day before parents pick up the children.

School Year Schedule & Session Offerings

Eligibility for Nature Preschool is determined by the child's age on December 1 in the year of enrollment and if he/she has independent bathroom skills. To maintain a balance in the classroom we have a limited number of three- and four-year old slots available in the mixed age classrooms. Children cannot attend both the morning and afternoon sessions. The '12-'13 school year will run September 10 through May 10, and will follow the Bullock Creek School District calendar. We are a 9-month program and require a commitment for the entire year.



| <u>Days of the week</u> | <u>Times</u> | <u>Ages</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Monday-Thursday | 8:45am-11:45am | 3 & 4 year olds |
| Monday-Thursday | 12:45pm-3:45pm | 4 year olds only |
| Monday, Wednesday, Friday | 9am-12pm | 3 & 4 year olds |
| Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday | 1pm-4pm | 3 & 4 year olds |
| Tuesday, Thursday | 9am-12pm | 3 year olds only |

Facility

Nature Preschool is held in a two-classroom building dedicated solely to preschool adjacent to the main Visitor Center. This space is designed to provide the best possible preschool environment for young children. The spacious classrooms allow for busy, active play. Three adults oversee a maximum of 18 children in the mixed-age classes and a maximum of 16 in the 3 year old class. Open-ended equipment and supplies encourage creative and cooperative learning. Two naturalized play areas provide children a supervised opportunity to dig, climb, and roam as they build their connection to the natural world. One playground is a sunny, open area while the other is wooded. Of course we can't forget the 1,150 acres of CNC property that offers great opportunities for daily group excursions.

Enrollment Policy

To enroll your child in Nature Preschool you will need to complete a registration form and submit it with a \$75 registration fee for one child or \$125 for two or more children from the same household.

We will do our best to place your child in your first choice as indicated on your registration form. If we are unable to do so, we will attempt to place your child in one of your other selections. If none of the sections you identified as acceptable on your registration form are available, your registration fee will be refunded. We will also discuss with you at that time your interest in being added to the waiting list.

Once your child has been placed, you will receive a confirmation letter, including a Parent Handbook. At that time, a \$250 deposit will be due within 10 working days to hold your child's place. This includes those receiving a partial scholarship. A deposit is not required for full scholarship recipients. This is a non-refundable, non-transferable deposit that will be applied to May's tuition. If the deposit exceeds your monthly payment the difference will be applied to your April tuition. The deposit will not be refunded if you withdraw your child from the program.

A complete list of needed documentation and paperwork will be sent to you mid-summer. Some of the documentation required before each child's first day of attendance includes:

- Proof of immunization
- Health appraisal (physical) signed by a licensed physician
- Copy of birth certificate

We ask that you complete paperwork as soon as possible and return it prior to Parent Orientation in August.

How You Can Reduce Your Tuition

We know that providing the best quality preschool education for your child represents a financial commitment. Just as the natural world is full of diversity, this preschool program has a rich diversity of students, including economic diversity. Families that meet the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) qualifying guidelines will be awarded full scholarships as space allows. There are limited GSRP slots available, so register early! These slots are only available for the four day per week programs.

For those families that don't qualify for full scholarships, the Nature Preschool has a scholarship fund which can partially reduce tuition. The goal of this scholarship fund is to reduce tuition so that a family receiving scholarship aid will spend no more than 5% of its household income on a child's preschool tuition. A household of four making \$60,000 or less will receive some level of assistance. If you're interested in being considered for a scholarship, please complete the scholarship application and submit it along with the registration form.

Payment Schedule

Upon notification of placement in the program, \$250 is due within 10 working days. This is a non-refundable, non-transferable deposit that will be applied to May's tuition. Monthly tuition payments commence September 1 with subsequent payments due on the first of each month. Tuition can be paid monthly or in one lump sum.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is critical to the development of young children as well as the Nature Preschool program. The main responsibilities for Nature Preschool parents include:

- Attending Parent Orientation, held in August without preschoolers, where you'll have a chance to meet the staff and learn what to expect for the coming year.
- Volunteering at least once monthly in the classroom if at all possible.
- Attending parent and family activities.
- Being available for two home visits and two parent/teacher conferences. (The first home visit will be arranged at Parent Orientation, and will occur in late August/early September. This gives the new student a chance to meet their teacher before school begins, and for you to ask any questions and take care of any last paperwork.)
- Reading newsletters and flyers sent home with your child.

Snacks & Meals

A daily healthy snack, such as fruit, cheese, crackers, juice and milk, are provided by Nature Preschool.

CNC Membership

Your tuition includes a one-year family membership beginning September 1. If you are already a family member of CNC your membership expiration date will be extended by one year.

Open Houses:

January 25, 5:30-7pm

February 9, 5:30-7pm

April 19, 5:30-7pm

Come see our classrooms, play areas & meet the teachers!

Registration Dates:

Alumni & Current Family registration begins January 16

New registration begins February 1

Scholarship Application

2012-13 School Year

Child's Name _____

Child's Date of Birth _____ Sex Male Female

Household Information

Number of children in household: _____ Number of adults in household: _____

Number of years in current residence: _____

Income Information

Gross Household income: \$ _____

Income measure: Weekly Bi-weekly Monthly Annually

Do you receive DHS childcare reimbursement, DHS cash assistance, or SSI assistance?: Yes No

Additional Information

Please comment on any special circumstances that affect your need for tuition assistance: _____

Please provide any other information you would like us to know as we determine scholarships: _____

Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Date

Scholarship Procedures:

Once your child has been placed and your scholarship award has been determined, you will receive a confirmation letter. At that time, a \$250 deposit will be due within 10 working days to hold your child's place. A deposit is not required for full scholarship recipients. This is a non-refundable, non-transferable deposit that will be applied to May's tuition. If the deposit exceeds your monthly payment the difference will be applied to your April tuition. In order to finalize your scholarship we will also need proof of income (last pay stubs, last tax form, etc). This includes those receiving a partial scholarship.

Please submit this completed scholarship form with the "Registration Form" on the following page.

The information on this form will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of determining scholarship assistance.

Nature Preschool Registration Form

2012-13 School Year

Child's Name _____

Child's Date of Birth _____ Sex Male Female

Tuition for 2012-13

4 day, half-day \$3,069 per year (\$341 per month)

3 day, half-day \$2,304 per year (\$256 per month)

2 day, half-day \$1,530 per year (\$170 per month)

Please rank your order of class preference below. If a class is left blank we will assume you are not interested in that particular session.

Monday-Thursday, 8:45am-11:45am, 3 & 4 year olds

Monday-Thursday, 12:45pm-3:45pm, 4 year olds only

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9am-12pm, 3 & 4 year olds

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 1pm-4pm, 3 & 4 year olds

Tuesday, Thursday, 9am-12pm, 3 year olds only

Are you applying for a scholarship? Yes No

If yes, please complete the "Scholarship Application" on the previous page.

Please tell us about your family:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____ Alternate phone (please specify) _____

Email address(es) _____

Employer(s) _____

What school do you expect your child to attend for kindergarten? _____

How did you hear about our program? (please mark all that apply)

Current/Alumni Family

Friend/word of mouth

Chippewa Nature Center newsletter

Teacher or educator

Midland County Preschool Partnership

Connecting Families magazine

Other _____

Please complete this registration form along with a \$75 registration fee for one child or \$125 for two or more children from the same household payable to Chippewa Nature Center and send to:

Chippewa Nature Center

400 S. Badour Rd.

Midland, MI 48640

To pay with Mastercard, Visa or Discover please stop by the Visitor Center or call 989-631-0830. If you'd like to apply for a scholarship be sure to include the Scholarship Application along with your registration form.

Nature Preschool

is a cooperative program of:



Inspiring people and institutions to protect the natural world.

&



Thriving...Giving...Growing...Together!

Nature Preschool

400 S. Badour Rd.

Midland, MI 48640

989-631-0830

www.chippewanaturecenter.org

