

Nature Preschool

Where learning comes naturally!

Registration Packet
2021-22



Venture Out!

Dear Families:

Thank you for your interest in Nature Preschool! We hope you'll join us in the fall as we embark on our 15th 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. What is unique about Nature 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 Chippewa Nature Center property. The children regularly hike to wooded areas, ponds, fields and the Homestead Farm. In other words, they're learning in the context of nature.

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 build their knowledge through first-hand experiences with nature, classroom materials and their relationships with peers and adults.

Please let us know if you have any questions, and we look forward to welcoming your family to our school community!



Sincerely,

Madison Powell

Madison Powell
Nature Preschool Director

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Chippewa Nature Center Mission

To connect all people with nature through educational, recreational and cultural experiences.



Program Purpose

Nature Preschool is a high-quality, play-based program which uses research-based curriculum practices to implement developmentally appropriate early childhood education with nature at its core.

Program Philosophy

At Nature Preschool, we believe that children are capable individuals 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 conflict resolution and cooperative learning.
- Appreciating the individuality of children and families, and celebrating diversity.
- Engaging the whole family in the nature-based educational process.



Curriculum

Nature Preschool is a play-based program. Our curriculum focuses on the whole child, promoting growth in physical, social, emotional and intellectual areas. Nature Preschool uses the Highscope® 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
- Natural science experiences
- Block play
- Music and movement
- Art activities
- Sensory activities
- Dramatic play
- Language activities
- Large and small motor activities
- Cooking and food experiences

At Nature Preschool, we use the Conscious Discipline® approach to behavior management, which is a self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. Positive discipline allows children to solve their own problems with the guidance and modeling of preschool staff, transforming conflict into a learning opportunity.

Typical Day at Nature Preschool

We value spontaneity in activities and take advantage of the “teachable moment.” We also know that young children 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 play areas. The adult dropping off the child will make sure the child has used the restroom, put away their backpack and extra clothes and signed in for the day, then take him/her to the outdoor play area (dressed for the weather) to join the teachers.



Outdoor Play & Group Exploration

Children will play for at least 60 uninterrupted minutes in the outdoor play area, then take a hike on the Nature Center grounds. Play area activities include but are not limited to, 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, greet one another, 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 after they finish eating and transition to choice time.



Choice Time

Children have time to choose an activity among the different interest areas of the indoor or outdoor 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, sand and water, art, toys and games, discovery, or cooking.



Small Group

Adult-initiated activities occur in small groups, and allow teachers to focus on a particular skill set. 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 to say goodbye and recall activities from the day before parents pick up the children. We sing the Goodbye Song together.

School Year Schedule & Session Offerings

Eligibility for Nature Preschool is determined by the child's age on Sept 1 in the year of enrollment. Children cannot attend both the morning and afternoon sessions. The official start dates for the 2021-22 school year have not yet been determined. This program generally runs from mid-September through mid-May.

Morning classes are held from 8:45-11:45 am or 9 am-12 pm.
Afternoon classes are held from 12:45-3:45 pm or 1-4 pm.

Days of the Week	Times	Ages
Tues, Thurs	Morning	3 year olds only
Mon, Wed, Fri	Morning	3 & 4 year olds
Mon, Tues, Wed	Afternoon	3 & 4 year olds
Mon-Thurs	Morning	4 year olds only
Mon-Thurs	Afternoon	4 year olds only



Facilities

Nature Preschool is held in a two-classroom, LEED Gold Certified building, dedicated solely to preschool, and in the main CNC Visitor Center. These spaces are designed to provide the best possible preschool environment for young children. Three adults oversee a maximum of 18 children in the 4-year old and mixed-age classes, and a maximum of 16 children in the 3-year old classes. Open-ended equipment and supplies encourage creative and cooperative learning. Natural play areas provide children with a supervised opportunity to dig, climb and explore as they build their connection to the natural world. In addition, the 1,500 acres of CNC property offer great opportunities for learning during the daily group explorations.



Nature Preschool LEED Gold Certified Building



CNC Visitor Center Play Area

To Enroll

Complete the online registration form at www.chippewanaturecenter.org/nature-preschool

For a paper copy, please contact Jill Derry at jderry@chippewanaturecenter.org or 989.631.0830.

Placement for Alumni and current families begins
Mon, Jan 4, 2021

Placements for new registrations begins
Mon, Feb 1, 2021
then on an ongoing basis until filled.

Enrollment Policy

To enroll your child in Nature Preschool, you will need to complete a registration form and submit it with a \$25 non-refundable registration fee per child.

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 are available, we will discuss with you at that time your interest in being added to the waiting list.

Once your child has been placed, you will receive an email confirmation. At that time, a \$250 deposit will be due within 10 working days to hold your child's place. This deposit can be paid online via the link provided in the email or by calling CNC. Those receiving a partial scholarship are still required to pay a deposit. However, a deposit is not required for full scholarship recipients. This is a non-refundable, non-transferable deposit that will be applied to the tuition account. The deposit will not be refunded if you withdraw your child.

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

- Proof of immunization (or a signed waiver)
- 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.

Tuition Assistance

We know that providing the best quality preschool education for your child represents a financial commitment. Nature Preschool has full and partial scholarships available to assist with tuition. The goal of this scholarship fund is to reduce cost so that a family receiving assistance will spend no more than 5% of its household income on a child's preschool tuition. The exact percentage is determined by household size and annual income. Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and Great Start Collaborative scholarship funding may be available to those who qualify. We are also grateful for the support of The Charles J. Strosacker Foundation and The Dow Chemical Company, which provide financial support to make Nature Preschool scholarships possible. If you are interested in being considered for a scholarship, please complete the scholarship application and submit it along with the registration form. Limited funds are available.

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 the last month(s) of your tuition payment. Monthly tuition payments commence Sept 1, with subsequent payments due on the first of each month. Sept-May. Tuition may be paid monthly or in one lump sum. Your initial email confirmation will include instructions for those interested in making payments online.

Tuition for 2021-22

4 day, half-day \$3,438 per year (\$382 per month)

3 day, half-day \$2,574 per year (\$286 per month)

2 day, half-day \$1,719 per year (\$191 per month)



Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is critical to the development of young children, as well as the Nature Preschool program as a whole. 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.
- Due to current COVID-19 policies, volunteering at Nature Preschool has been temporarily suspended. As soon as regulations are lifted, volunteer status will be redetermined.
- Attending parent and family activities.
- Being available for at least one home visit and two Family Connection Meetings. (The home visit will be arranged at Parent Orientation, and will occur in late Aug/early Sept. This gives the new student a chance to meet their teacher before school begins, and for you to ask any questions. A second home visit may occur at the end of the school year. Family Connection Meetings occur in Dec and April.)
- Reading newsletters and flyers sent home with your child or via email.
- Communicating regularly with your child's teachers and other Nature Preschool staff.

Snacks

A daily healthy snack (such as fruit, cheese and crackers) is provided by Nature Preschool. Children are provided with a water bottle to use during class time. We are a peanut-free building. We also work closely with parents to ensure snacks meet the needs of every student, including those with other food allergies.



CNC Membership

Your tuition includes a one-year family membership beginning Sept 1. If you are already a family member of CNC, your membership expiration date will be extended by one year. As a CNC member, you help promote stewardship of natural resources and help us teach visitors about the natural world.

Membership benefits include:

- 20% discount for workshops, field trips and other programs, including Nature Day Camp
- Invitation to members-only events including Maple Syrup Day pancake meal, early access to the Native Plant Sale, Members Only 4th of July event and special preview of the Nature Art Show & Sale
- In-home and/or electronic delivery of the quarterly newsletter
- Free admission to Maple Syrup Day and Fall Harvest Festival
- 10% Nature Center Store discount
- Opportunity to host birthday parties
- Free or reduced admission to over 180 nature centers worldwide



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Important Dates

Fri, Dec 4, 2020	2021-22 Placement Request Form available
Mon, Jan 4, 2021	Placement for current and alumni families begins
Mon, Feb 1, 2021	Placement for new registrations begins, then on an ongoing basis until filled



Trail Hours:

19 miles of trails open year-round, dawn-to-dark daily!

www.chippewanaturecenter.org

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