

Chippewa Nature Center's

# Nature Preschool

## Registration Information



**2015-2016**

Dear Families:

Thank you for your interest in Nature Preschool! We hope you'll join us in the fall for another 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. 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 be building their knowledge through their first-hand experiences with nature, classroom materials, and their relationships with peers and adults.

We hope this packet provides you with the information you need, and we look forward to welcoming your family to our school community!

Sincerely,

Rachel Larimore  
Director of Education

**Chippewa Nature Center Mission:** Chippewa Nature Center is a non-profit organization whose mission is to facilitate the enjoyment and understanding of our natural and cultural resources as relevant to the Saginaw Valley's ecosystems, to promote environmental awareness, and foster responsible stewardship.

**Program Purpose:** 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.

**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

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
- Natural science experiences
- Art activities
- Music and movement
- Block play
- Sensory activities
- Language activities

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 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, put away the child’s backpack and extra clothes, and sign in for the day. From there the child will join the teachers outside.

#### Outdoor Play & Group Exploration

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. The outdoor portion of the day is typically 1-1.5 hours of the day.

#### 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 interest 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
- Sand & Water
- Art
- Toys & Games
- Discovery
- Cooking

#### Small Group

Adult-directed 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 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 September 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 '15-'16

school year will run September 14 through May 13, and will follow the Bullock

Creek School District calendar. (Keep in mind many holidays fall on Mondays and Fridays.) 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	3 & 4 year old <u>OR</u> 4 year olds only
Monday, Wednesday, Friday	8:45am-11:45am <u>OR</u> 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, LEED® Gold Certified building dedicated solely to preschool adjacent to the main CNC Visitor Center. This space is designed to provide the best possible preschool environment for young children. 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 natural play areas provide children a supervised opportunity to dig, climb, and roam as they build their connection to the natural world. In addition, the 1,150 acres of CNC property offers great opportunities for learning during the daily group explorations.

## 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 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 an email confirmation letter. 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 confirmation 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 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. Just as the natural world is full of diversity, this preschool program has a rich diversity of students, including economic diversity. Nature Preschool has full and partial scholarships available to reduce tuition. The goal of this scholarship fund is to reduce tuition 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. If you're interested in being considered for a scholarship, please complete the scholarship application and submit it along with the registration form.



We are so grateful for the support of The Dow Chemical Company which provides financial support to make these scholarships possible.

## 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 your tuition account. 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. Your initial email confirmation will include instructions for making payments online, and you may also pay in person or over the phone.

## 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 a home visit and two parent/teacher conferences. (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. Those children in the four day per week classes will have a second home visit in May. Parent/teacher conferences occur in Dec and April.)
- Reading newsletters and flyers sent home with your child.

## Snacks

A daily healthy snack, such as fruit, cheese, crackers, juice and milk, is provided by Nature Preschool. 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 September 1. If you are already a family member of CNC your membership expiration date will be extended by one year.

### Open Houses:

January 28, 5:30-7pm

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

### Registration Dates:

Alumni & Current Family registration begins January 15

New registration begins February 1



# Scholarship Application

## 2015-16 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 your tuition account. 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

## 2015-16 School Year

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

### Tuition for 2015-16

4 day, half-day \$3,150 per year (\$350 per month)

3 day, half-day \$2,385 per year (\$265 per month)

2 day, half-day \$1,620 per year (\$180 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. Sessions are mixed ages (3- & 4-year olds) unless designated. Those marked with "NSB" will be held at the Nature Study Building at the end of the Homestead Road.

### Morning

\_\_\_\_ Mon-Thur, 8:45am-11:45am (NSB)

\_\_\_\_ Mon, Wed, Fri, 8:45am-11:45am

\_\_\_\_ Mon, Wed, Fri, 9am-12pm

\_\_\_\_ Tues & Thur, 9am-12pm, 3 year olds only

### Afternoon

\_\_\_\_ Mon-Thur, 12:45pm-3:45pm

\_\_\_\_ Mon-Thur, 12:45pm-3:45pm, 4 year olds only (NSB)

\_\_\_\_ Mon, Tues, Wed, 1pm-4pm

Are you applying for a scholarship? ☐ Yes ☐ No

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

Do you currently have a child attending Nature Preschool? ☐ Yes ☐ No Previously? ☐ Yes ☐ No

### ***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

☐ Midland County Preschool Partnership

☐ Teacher or educator

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this registration form along with a \$25 registration fee 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.

**Open House:**

January 28, 5:30-7pm

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

**Registration Dates:**

Alumni & Current Family registration begins January 15

New registration begins February 1



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989-631-0830

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[www.chippewanaturecenter.org](http://www.chippewanaturecenter.org)

*Inspiring people and institutions to protect the natural world.*