



2022/23

EdenAcres NatureDays

Family Handbook



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Forest Grove, OR

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EdenAcres
Environmental Education



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NatureDays Directory

We would love to hear from you! Give us a ring or send us a note with any questions, thoughts, ideas, feedback. Whatever it is you have to share, we would like to hear it.

NatureDays Forest Campus: [16528 NW Johnson Road, Hillsboro](#). Using this address, GPS will take you to the very old farmhouse that is on the property but that we will not be using. The entrance to the property that we will use is north of the house. Use this pin in your GPS to find the driveway to the forest school entrance - [LINK HERE](#)

NatureDays Farm Campus: [54303 NW Old Wilson River Road, Gales Creek, OR 97117](#)

Phone: 971.470.7502

Please use this number to report absences, illnesses, or tardies.

Email: naturedays.edenacres@gmail.com

Website: www.edenacres.org

Name - Role

Fallon Harris - Executive Director

Hanna Deacon - Program Manager

Sarah Moffitt - Lead Teacher

Alex Kelley - Instructor

Monica Hescheles - Instructor

Carina Zehr - Instructor

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Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission

At EdenAcres, we work to transform education & build community through hands-on, experiential, and nature-based learning.

Vision

We envision a community that cares for the Earth and for people, where children and families have the resources and support necessary to live happy, healthy, and abundant lives. Our goal is ecological literacy for all learners in our community. We acknowledge that there are many access points to addressing a changing climate, to increasing academic achievement, and improving the lives of children and families. We have chosen education as our focal point because we believe that education is the means by which we pass culture from one generation to the next. EdenAcres Forest and Farm School is only one of our many programs that work towards creating a more happy, healthy, and abundant community.

We value:

Emergent Learning - Children are naturally curious, asking questions and discovering the world around them through their senses, play, and exploration. Our curriculum is responsive to children's interests in order to create meaningful learning experiences.

Emotional & Physical Safety - We create safe places where children can thrive while being able to engage in reasonable risk-taking during play. Building a strong foundation of social-emotional wellbeing is core to our curriculum.

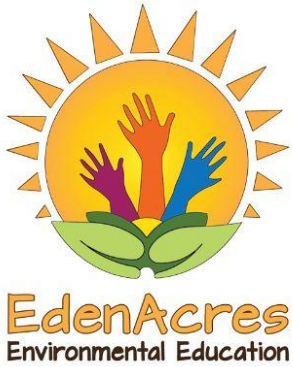
Families - Families carry and pass down their wisdom from generation to generation. We honor the beautiful diversity of families and encourage family involvement through participation in annual celebrations and festivals, volunteering, family classes, workshops, and events.

Excellence - We use methods and practices that are evidence-based and supported by quality data in order to cultivate learning. Our staff are educated and experienced in a variety of areas that enable a diverse learning experience.

Nurturing Individuality - Your children are unique. We embrace and encourage each child's uniqueness by providing kids with a variety of experiences and choices. Our educators work hard to inspire and nurture individuality, one connection at a time.

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NatureDays Programs

What is NatureDays?

At the heart and soul of NatureDays programs is engagement with the natural world. Through handwork, art and craft, play, and exploration, children learn how to overcome adversity, work alongside others, and develop a deeper relationship with nature. Each day children move between instructor-directed activities and self-directed play, both of which perform important roles in the holistic development of a child's heart, hands, and mind. Children learn traditional skills related to seasonal themes as well as have the opportunity to engage with the natural world on their own terms. An authentic connection to nature comes from within and self-directed play provides this opportunity. Every day we enhance teamwork and confidence through games and reflection, develop outdoor survival skills, learn native plants and stories, and spend time exploring and playing outdoors. The academic subjects are woven into our daily rhythm through projects, games, activities, and journaling. Our programs are open to all who are interested in giving their child a nature immersion experience that will build confidence and leadership, provoke a sense of awe and feelings of stewardship, while having fun learning and exploring out of doors.

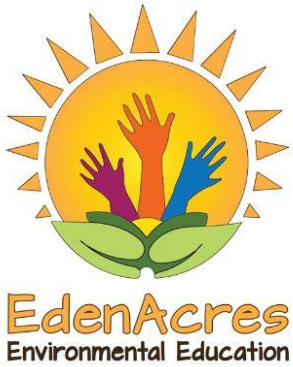
We will spend each day doing a variety of outdoor activities, aligned with the seasons as well as with the children's ages, stages of development, and interests. We will spend time exploring and observing nature, tracking, and following our curiosities. All of our day will be spent outdoors, rain or shine. Through our exploration, we will learn about how the world works (interdependency & ecology, physics, botany, etc.). We'll take our questions to field guides and use science tools such as magnifiers, compasses, & microscopes. We'll play games that aid in developing an active and deep understanding of the natural world. We'll create habitats, engage in team building (problem solving, creating, games, etc.), hone our primitive skills and camp craft (fire, forts/ shelters, bows & arrows, etc.), make beautiful art (nature art, weaving with grass, willows, etc.), explore "animal forms" (imitations of animals), build cob & willow structures, learn to use knives and tools, find our way using orienteering (compass & map reading), and explore sustainability skills, & homesteading skills. We will make nature journals and field guides, use math in construction activities, and write poetry. All of this is balanced with plenty of nature play and a focus on building our social-emotional toolbox.

Forest Kindergarten

- Ages 5 - 7
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
- Hillsboro Forest Campus

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At Forest Kindergarten we celebrate that children learn through hands-on and minds-on experiences. Each day our educators provide opportunities for children to select, explore, and practice skills. What may look like “just play” to an adult is a child actively learning. Through a balance of play, exploration, and instructor-led games and activities, children develop problem-solving, self-regulation, language, social, and motor skills while developing a deeper connection with nature.

Forest Kindergarten Rhythm of the Day:

8:30 - 9:00	Drop-off
9:00 - 9:30	Forest Exploration
9:30 - 10:00	Morning Circle/Stretching and Breathing/Teambuilding Activity
10:00 - 10:30	Snack
10:30 - 12:00	Forest Exploration/Ancestral Skills/Project
12:00 - 1:30	Lunch & Free Play
1:30 - 2:30	Storytime/Handwork/Project
2:30 - 3:00	Clean-up & Closing Circle
3:00 - 3:30	Pick-up

Forest School

- Ages 8 - 12
- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
- Hillsboro Forest Campus

At Forest School, we spend our days engaging with the natural world, while also building confidence and leadership, provoking a sense of awe, and inspiring feelings of stewardship. Through hands-on projects, journaling, play, and exploration children learn how to overcome adversity, work alongside others, and develop a deeper relationship with nature while having fun and learning outdoors. Our place-based curriculum integrates reading, writing, math, social studies, and the arts through hands-on projects, games, and activities.

Forest School Rhythm of the Day:

8:30 - 9:00	Drop-off
9:00 - 9:30	Forest Time
9:30 - 10:00	Morning Circle/Stretching and Breathing/Teambuilding Activity
10:00 - 10:30	Game/Movement Activity/Exploration
10:30 - 11:30	Snack & Free Play
11:30 - 12:30	Exploration/Ancestral Skills/Project
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch & Free Play

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1:30 - 2:45	Science-based Inquiry/Project
2:45 - 3:00	Clean-up & Closing Circle
3:00 - 3:30	Pick-up

Forest Leadership

- Ages 12 - 14
- Thursdays
- Hillsboro Forest Campus

Forest Leadership provides a space for young teens to learn leadership, teamwork, outdoor, and stewardship skills while forming strong bonds with the forest and the community. Through a seamless progression of teambuilding, mastering outdoor skills, and designing and completing a stewardship project, students will develop the skills to become young leaders. By integrating science, social studies, history, mathematics, art, and writing into place-based projects, Forest Leadership cultivates social, emotional, academic, and leadership skills. Students foster a deep connection with nature as they learn, play games, and work as a team outdoors on our forest campus.

Forest Leadership Rhythm of the Day:

8:30 - 9:00	Drop-off
9:00 - 9:30	Morning Circle/Stretching and Breathing/Movement Activity
9:30 - 10:30	Teambuilding Activity
10:30 - 11:00	Morning Break
11:00 - 12:30	Outdoor Skills/Project/Exploration
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch Break
1:30 - 2:45	Science-based Inquiry/Stewardship Project
2:45 - 3:00	Clean-up, Closing Circle, Reflection
3:00 - 3:30	Pick-up

Farm School

- Ages 6 - 12
- Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Gales Creek Farm Campus

At the heart and soul of Farm School is engagement with the natural world and reconnecting with our agricultural roots. With a seed to table approach, children will participate in the many parts of the cycle of growing, harvesting, and preparing food, as well as participate in the daily rhythms of caring for the animals who live on the farm. Through engaging with farm life, exploring forests, creeks, and ponds, learning with hands-on projects, journaling,

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and play, children build resilience, learn from others younger and older, and develop a deeper relationship with nature while also fostering an intimate relationship with their food.

Farm School Rhythm of the Day:

8:30 - 9:00	Drop-off
9:00 - 9:45	Game/Movement Activity & Morning Circle
9:45 - 10:30	Farm and Animal Chores
10:30 - 11:30	Snack & Free Play
11:30 - 12:30	Exploration/Farm Project/Ancestral Skills
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch & Free Play
1:30 - 2:45	Science-based Inquiry/Project
2:45 - 3:00	Clean-up & Closing Circle
3:00 - 3:30	Pick-up

Program Philosophy

Children are intrinsically motivated to learn. They do so through play and exploring the world around them. At EdenAcres, we foster a child's natural sense of wonder as we gently move between instructor-led and child-driven play and activities. Academic concepts of numeracy, literacy, culture, and science are seamlessly integrated into our daily rhythms. We have chosen the forest as our classroom because research shows that experiences in nature are essential for the healthy growth and development of children. Abundant time in natural settings yields long term benefits in children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. On top of all that, nature is the perfect place to learn about the world we live in. The natural world provides the living context in which to learn about cycles, interdependence, energy and resources, scale and limits, diversity, succession, and sustainability. Forest and Farm School are spaces where children can explore the natural world & learn to ask relevant questions, develop problem-solving skills & processes for thinking and searching for answers, & learn how to live, work, & communicate cooperatively.

We create a setting where children can grow into citizens of the world; respecting all cultures, creatures, and environments. Our curriculum emerges from each child's unique needs and aptitudes, and provides children with the skills they need to be prepared for our ever-changing world. Children learn to self-regulate and navigate interactions with friends and others. Instructors "follow the child," learning and responding to each child's uniqueness. We maintain a high child to staff ratio so children have more opportunities for meaningful interactions with their mentors.

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Curriculum

Our curriculum derives from emergent learning, place-based, project-based, and child-driven pedagogical philosophies. The program is founded in broad, realistic educational experiences geared to children's current stages of development, to promote the constructive processes of learning necessary to broaden emerging intellectual and social/emotional skills. We use a plan-do-review technique where children are active participants in determining and reviewing their exploration for the day. We celebrate that children learn through hands-on and minds-on experiences by providing opportunities each day for your child to select, explore, and practice skills unique to their needs and interests.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Drop off and Pick up Procedure

We use [Procare software](#) to manage signing in/out, as well as for communicating with staff, sharing photos and activities, and keeping an up to date profile for your child. You will receive a separate document and an email with more information on how to download the Procare app.

Drop-off:

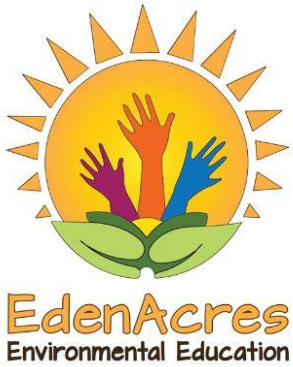
1. Arrive during the designated drop off period from 8:30 - 9:00. A staff person will be directing traffic.
2. Open the Procare app.
3. Click on the QR code button at the top of the screen.
4. Follow the steps on the screen to sign in your child(ren).
5. Children will wash hands immediately after exiting the car.
6. Your child will be escorted to the morning free play area by a staff person where a second staff person will be waiting to supervise.

Pick-up:

1. Arrive during the designated pick up window of 3:00 - 3:30.
2. Please remain in your vehicle. A staff person will escort your child to you.
3. Once your child is in your vehicle, open the Procare app.
4. Click on the QR code button at the top of the screen.
5. Follow the steps on the screen to sign in your child(ren).

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Our Educators

When hiring teachers and administrators for our programs, we value diverse education and life experiences. We look for staff members who have a passion for working with children and their families and deep love and understanding of the natural world. The foundation of our teaching team is built upon staff members who:

- Are knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate practices for learners.
- Are prepared to share their life experiences, talents, and interests.
- Enjoy the outdoors and have a personal connection to the natural world.
- Professional, creative, and passionate individuals, experienced in fostering the whole child and developing a child-driven curriculum.

Fallon Harris (she/her/hers) is EdenAcres' Executive Director. Fallon has worked with children and youth outdoors in partnership with organizations such as Swallowtail School & Farm, Forest Grove Community Alternative Learning Center, Roots & Shoots, NWRSE-PACE, Forest Grove School District, Centro Cultural, & more. She is the co-founder of EdenAcres, was the primary architect of Centro Cultural's outdoor summer program at B Street Farm, director of Swallowtail School's Farm Monday program, and was a co-developer of Farmworks Inc., a farm-based early childhood summer camp. In collaboration with Pacific University, Fallon has designed courses for the College of Teaching and Learning focused on providing new teachers the tools and knowledge necessary to bring education for sustainability and place-based learning into their classes and careers. Fallon is passionate about the natural world, experiential education, and sharing the many joys of this beautiful planet with children and families.

Hanna Deacon (she/her/hers) is EdenAcre's Nature Immersion Program Manager. Hanna gained a strong love for the outdoors and nature while growing up in Alaska. She has since worked with youth in many different outdoor and garden settings including summer camps, garden education programs, and afterschool programs. She received her B.A. in Environmental Studies from the University of San Francisco and her M.S. in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana, focusing on sustainable food systems and environmental education. Hanna loves sharing her days with children in forests and farms, building fairy homes, and watching and listening to birds!

Sarah Moffitt (she/her/hers) grew up in Northern California near the American River. The Sierra Nevada mountains, the Point Reyes National Seashore, and the rolling oak woodlands around Sacramento were her playground. She earned an undergraduate B.S. degree in Wildlife, Fish, and Conservation Biology from UC Davis, and worked as a biologist for ten

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years going on wild adventures swimming through chilly rivers with salmon, clambering over mountain passes that scrape the sky, and wading through neck-high grass buzzing with rattle snakes. She received a M.Ed. in Science Education and certificate in Education for Environment and Community from the University of Washington and IslandWood while teaching outdoors during the rainiest winter in Seattle history. She enjoys deep philosophical conversations while walking or paddling with friends, books, and exploring new places.

Alex Kelley (he/him/his) began his passion for outdoor learning in the tide pools and swamps of Eastern Massachusetts as a young child. Chasing this passion, he earned his B.A. in environmental studies from Gustavus Adolphus College and his Masters Certificate in environmental education from Antioch University. Alex spent the two years before joining EdenAcres honing his teaching skills at the Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in Minnesota and the N.E.E.D. Academy in Massachusetts. By slowing down and asking questions about the phenomena that arise around us, Alex tries to emphasize a feeling of present mind in every aspect of his teaching. When he's not teaching, Alex enjoys practicing martial arts, longboarding, and taking his dog on hikes.

Monica Hescheles (she/her/hers) grew up in the foothills of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, spending her formative years exploring the diverse terrain of the high desert. She continued pursuing her passion for adventure with an A.A. in Outdoor Education from Colorado Mountain College. Monica fell in love with the Pacific Northwest's lush forests, jagged mountains and abundant water while finishing her B.A. in Environmental Education from Western Washington University. She spent the last few years teaching restoration and farm education. Monica enjoys growing, cooking and eating local food and loves spending her days in natural spaces where the small details hint at seasonal changes and it is easy to be fully present. She is excited to learn from the discovery of children, splash in lots of puddles and observe the many birds that call the forest and farm home at EdenAcres.

Carina Zehr - bio coming soon!

Teacher to Student Ratio

We believe in the importance of maintaining high standards regarding staff to student ratios. We also believe that the process of developing meaningful relationships with the outdoors is best achieved in small groups. We maintain a maximum student-teacher ratio of 7:1 for children 5-11 and 10:1 for children 12-14.

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Our School Sites

Hillsboro Forest Campus

Our forest classroom is 40 acres of stunning forest with varying topography, forest types and stages of succession, meadows and fields, and a stream with an active beaver family! It is a lovely site full of great opportunities for environmental education. Our forest classroom has a series of trails, gathering spaces, and a natural stream running through the lush, native forest. The stream is teeming with frogs, butterflies, birds, and forest life.

[See the site by viewing this video on Youtube by clicking here.](#)

The site is located at [16528 NW Johnson Road, Hillsboro](#). Using this address, GPS will take you to the very old farmhouse that is on the property but that we will not be using. The entrance to the property that we will use is north of the house, pass the house if you are coming from the south (Hwy 26) using the second driveway on your right and before the house if coming from the north (skyline and cornelius pass) using the first driveway on your left. Look for orange cones marking the entrance. Use this pin in your GPS to find the driveway to the forest school entrance - [LINK HERE](#)

The driveway is a one-way loop. Once you enter, pull forward until a teacher stops you. This will be at the top of the hill where there is a big open grassy area. A teacher will assist you with check-in. Once check-in is complete, the teacher will bring your child to wash their hands and then to one of our covered outdoor classroom spaces to put their bags.

Gales Creek Farm Campus

Our farm campus is located at Duncan Farm in Gales Creek at 54303 NW Old Wilson River Road, far from the sounds of the city, where time slows down and children breathe in the fresh, country air and learn the rhythm of life on a farm. Caring for the pigs, chickens, bunnies, and gardens is balanced with exploring winding trails through the forest, climbing trees, discovering seasonal streams, and discovering all of the wild things that call this farm and forest home.

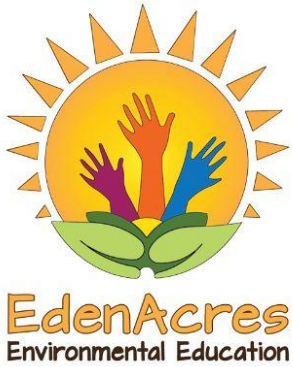
Please park along the road when dropping off and picking up from farm school. A teacher will assist you with check-in. Once check-in is complete, the teacher will bring your child to one of our covered outdoor classroom spaces to put their bags and then wash hands.

Address:

[54303 NW Old Wilson River Road, Gales Creek, OR 97117](#)

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Registration, Tuition & Important Dates

School Calendar and Tuition

Families can choose to enroll their child/ren on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, or any combination of days! Registration is by semester or for the full year. A 5% discount is given when you enroll for the full year.

School Calendar

Fall Semester (16 weeks): 9/12/22 - 1/27/23

First day of fall semester: Monday September 12

Thanksgiving Break: November 21 - 25

Winter Break: December 19 - January 6

Spring Semester (16 weeks): 1/30/23 - 5/26/23

First day of spring semester: Monday, January 30

Spring Break: March 20 - 24

Last day of spring semester: May 26

Tuition

Flexible payment plans are available! We also offer a range of discounts and scholarships. If you feel that cost is restrictive, we encourage you to apply for a scholarship. Ensuring equity in access to high-quality environmental education is one of our core values. Our scholarship program is a pillar of the program and we are proud to help families provide this experience for their children.

Fall Semester:

1 day/week for 16 week session- \$1,400

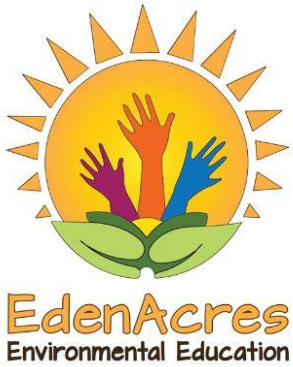
2 days/week for 16 week session - \$2,800

3 days/week for 16 week session - \$4,200

4 days/week for 16 week session - \$5,600

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Spring Semester:

- 1 day/week for 16 week session- \$1,400
- 2 days/week for 16 week session - \$2,800
- 3 days/week for 16 week session - \$4,200
- 4 days/week for 16 week session - \$5,600

Discounts

- A 5% discount is given when you enroll for the full year.
- Sibling Discounts: 2nd child 5% / 3rd child 10%
- \$50 off when you pay via check

Payment plans are available upon request. A \$100 nonrefundable deposit/child upon registration is required to reserve your child's spot. Monthly installments are due by the 15th of each month. Scholarships are available. If you feel that the cost is restrictive, then you probably qualify for a scholarship. Please apply online at www.edenacres.org

Refunds & Withdrawal Policy

All deposits are nonrefundable. If you choose to withdraw your child from the program, you must submit your withdrawal notice via email at least 30 days in advance of the desired withdrawal date in order to be eligible for a refund or to be relieved of your responsibility to pay the remainder of your tuition fee.

A withdrawal fee of 15% of the total tuition will be applied for all withdrawals. If withdrawal occurs with 29 days or less notice, we cannot provide a refund OR if you are on a payment plan you will still be responsible to pay your remaining tuition fee. We understand that unforeseeable life events happen, under such special circumstances we are happy to apply your remaining tuition fee as credit towards another EdenAcres program for use within 1 year of issuance.

Billing through the Procure App

We use the Procure app to process billing, send invoices, store students' information, communicate with families, and share photos. We ask that you also download the Procure app to sign your child in and out everyday, communicate with teachers, and pay your bill. You will receive an email from Procure with a unique 10-digit code and instructions on how to download and log into the app. You will be provided another document with more information about the Procure app.

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Weather, School Closures, & Local or National Emergencies

Our programs have nature immersion at their heart and soul - by their very nature, we are exposed to the elements. The meaningful experiences students gain from interacting with various forms of weather is invaluable and a core part of the program. During extreme weather such as high winds, thunderstorms, and extreme cold, we will take shelter in our covered outdoor classrooms. Under all other circumstances, parents should expect that their children will spend the entire duration of the day outdoors. If a student is not suitably dressed for the weather, parents may be contacted to bring appropriate gear and/or pick the child up.

As an entirely outdoor program, EdenAcres Forest and Farm School is more affected by extreme weather than indoor schools. As much as possible, we will follow the Hillsboro and Forest Grove School Districts for inclement weather closings. However, as your children's safety and learning experience is paramount to us, on occasion inclement weather may cause the limitation or cancellation of school hours independent of the public school system. In case of closure, we will always do our best to notify you as far in advance as possible. Notifications of delays and cancellations will be sent to parents via the Procure app and via email. If we should need to close early due to weather, emergency, or other special circumstances, you will be notified by phone.

We reserve the right to cancel for a period of time if the administration believes that it is necessary for the safety of the children or adherence to law. Examples of reasons for closures include but are not limited to: extreme weather, local school district closures, national and local disasters and/or emergencies, and natural disasters. These are considered circumstances beyond our control and no reimbursement will be given for tuition paid for that time.

Health & Medications

If a child has had any of the following symptoms in the last 24 hours before the morning of class, please don't bring them: fever, vomiting, upset stomach, stomach ache, sore throat, diarrhea, skin problems, body aches, sneezing, coughing, eye or nose drainage, sibling highly contagious or any other symptom you think might indicate they are just coming down with

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something. For your children's & other's health, please be ok with he/she having a full day of wellness before returning.

If medication is necessary for your child, notify your child's instructor. Please **DO NOT** give your child medicine to bring to school (including vitamins, herbs & homeopathic meds). If there were contagious illnesses recently in your household, please inform us (flu, etc.).

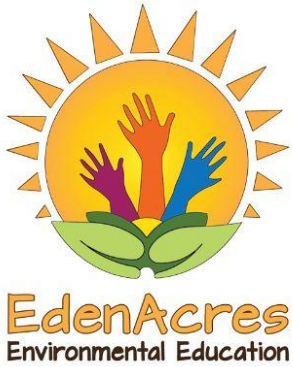
In order to ensure that our staff can provide a safe and successful learning environment for all children, please inform the lead teacher if your child is taking or begins taking any medication that may affect their behavior, mood, or ability to be in a group setting. In addition, if there are any medication changes, please let us know. All disclosure of children's medical history will be completely confidential.

Please read the COVID-19 health and safety protocols document thoroughly. The document provides details about symptoms that require your child to stay home, personal protective equipment, and other details regarding keeping our community healthy and safe.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We strive to create a safe and equitable space for all children and staff to be able to be their best selves. We define equity as the opportunity for every individual to have the ability to reach their full potential. Our definition of equity encompasses race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nation of origin, ability and alterability/disability, language, experiences, education, socioeconomic status, social/emotional or developmental experience, and physical appearance. We welcome and strive to provide a warm, nurturing environment for all.

If your student needs extra support to feel welcome, safe, and supported, please contact us so that we can work with you to find the best solutions. Because of the wide variety of terrain at each site, students with physical limitations should contact us prior to registration so that we can make sure we will be able to serve your child's needs.



Parent Expectations and Ways to Get Involved

Parent Expectations

EdenAcres holds parents and guardians to the same high standards of behavior and conduct to which we hold our students. We are a community and we seek to create a positive, safe, and respectful environment for all involved.

- Communicate with respect, honesty, and integrity
- Offensive or profane language, harassment, disruptive or bullying behaviors, threatening behavior, verbal abuse, or physical violence will not be tolerated.
- Complete registration, forms, and pay school fees on time.
- Know and abide by and support the school's policies, as outlined in this handbook and elsewhere available for parents' review.
- Respect the privacy of staff, children, and families within the organization as appropriate.
- When you have questions, comments, or concerns, please share them with staff members.

How to Get Involved

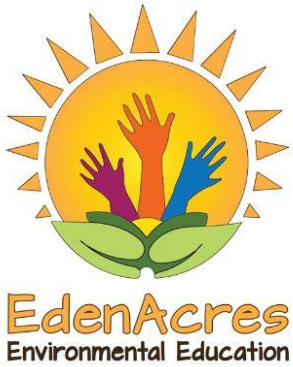
We love having visitors! We always appreciate parents who can help with special projects, join us for a walk, read a story, or share something special with the class. All visits need to be pre arranged with the program manager. While visiting, we ask that parents observe and encourage their child to adhere to school rules and routines. In order to assure as smooth a transition as possible, we ask that you refrain from visiting during the first month of school. This is a special time, both for your child and their teachers.

Opportunities to be involved include:

- Cultural Celebrations
- Photography
- Reading to students
- Marketing assistance
- Musical presentations
- Birthdays
- Serve on our Board of Directors
- Serve on a Parent Committee

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Communication

An open line of communication enriches the educational experience of our students and is an essential element for building partnerships. Your input is important to us. We are always happy to schedule time to discuss any academic, social, emotional, or developmental questions either by phone, e-mail or in person. Please keep the lines of communication open with us and let us know of any significant events in your child's life. Visitors, work trips, moving, new babies, divorce, illness or death can affect children and how they interact in a group setting. When we are informed about these changes, we are better equipped to offer support and encouragement to your child.

You may contact your teachers at any point during the day via the Procure app messaging function. Your teachers will post pictures and provide updates about what they are doing each week. You can also reach out to the Program Manager at naturedays.edenacres@gmail.com with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Preparing Your Child for the Best Day at School

What to Bring & Not to Bring

Each day your child should have in a backpack the following items: water bottle (at least 16 oz., that will not drip when on its side), a healthy snack & lunch, and extra gloves/mittens. They should also come on the first day with one complete extra set of clothes. Please label everything, especially clothing, jackets, and water bottles! Please put the extra set of clothes into a ziplock bag (to ensure it stays dry) with your child's name on it. We will have a tote to put extra clothing in that we will keep on site.

Food

Children should bring a healthy lunch & snack each day, with plenty of foods that are high in protein. Quite often, kids do not bring enough food. Alternately, don't be surprised if not much is eaten. The latter is often due to distraction and is most common in the early weeks. We are a "no-waste" program. Please pack without any waste in 100% reusable containers. The kids occasionally are offered wild foods or garden foods we harvest or prepare.

In order to ensure the health and safety of all students, we are a peanut and tree nut free campus. If you have any concerns, let us know.

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Toys From Home

To avoid conflicts and reduce desires, we ask that toys from home stay at home. Children are welcome to bring in items that teach us something (nature items, unique pets, books, small machines, antiques, musical instruments, etc.). Small items from the natural world can be donated or loaned to our “Nature Museum” here.

Cell Phones

We ask that any children with a cell phone please turn the phone off during the hours the program is running. If there’s a situation in which you need your child to leave it on, please inform your child’s teacher.

Media

Children who watch TV and video games really DO affect the school environment and other children. Their fantasy and discussion often focuses on scenes from TV or video games. Disturbing or over-exciting scenes are often acted out in order to deal with them. This is an age of imitation. We request families to be careful about selecting quality & quantity of media for children, especially the day before class.

Clothing Requirements & Resources for Outdoor Gear

If we can be warm and comfortable in our clothing, then we can be outside in any weather. As the oft-repeated Swedish proverb goes: “there is no bad weather, only bad clothing”. Wearing the right clothes for the weather is crucial to ensuring everyone has a good experience. Encouraging your child to be a part of the experience of picking out their “special” forest and farm school clothes will help ensure the process of getting dressed in the morning goes smoothly. Please label all removable clothing and other belongings with your child’s name, accidents happen and it’s easy for clothes and personal items to get mixed up.

Here is what we require:

All Year

- Comfortable, warm and waterproof footwear. Sandals with backs (no flip flops or slides) are acceptable during the warmer days in early fall and late spring.
- Clothing that can get muddy and dirty
- Loose fitting clothing for easy movement
- Rain pants and rain jacket
- Minimum 1 pair of extra WARM clothes stored in a ziplock bag with child’s name (i.e. underwear, pants, shirts, and thick socks). This will be stored on site.
- A water bottle
- Nutritious snacks and lunch

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Winter Months

- Head: warm, non-cotton hat.
- Torso: loose fitting non-cotton long underwear, fleece jacket + other warm layers as needed, raincoat with hood.
- Hands: warm, waterproof gloves/mittens that are easy to take on and off.
- Legs: loose fitting non-cotton long underwear, fleece or other warm non-cotton pants to wear underneath rain pants.
- Feet: non-cotton, preferably wool socks and warm, waterproof boots (we recommend Bogs Boots or similar)

Please let us know if you have a hard time getting any of these items. We have lots of things to loan out. You can also check out our facebook outdoor gear swap page for sharing and finding gear.

Outdoor School Shop

We have partnered with the Outdoor School Shop to offer an EdenAcres-specific outdoor gear shop for families! If you shop within the EdenAcres store, you will also receive 15% off. Shop the EdenAcres store using this link:

<https://outdoorschoolshop.com/schools/eden-acres-environmental>

Use the code EDEN for 15% off

Other Resources for Forest School Gear

- www.oakiwear.com
- www.bogsfootwear.com
- www.landsend.com
- www.rei.com
- www.columbia.com/kids-clothing/
- www.hellyhansen.com/
- <https://www.polarnopyretusa.com/>
- <https://us.reima.com/collections/kids>
- www.sierratradingpost.com
- www.darntough.com
- <http://wildtalesof.com/howtodresskidsforcoldandrainyweather/>

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Knives & Bladed Tools

We use knives and other bladed tools to make primitive crafts such as burn spoons & bow drills, for making tools, and for teaching fine motor skills and focus. Knives from home must be sheathed and need to be checked in with an instructor at drop-off. No folding or other pocket knives are permitted. We use (and love!) MoraKniv knives.

For your child to carve during an authorized carving activity, they must be Knife Safety Certified by one of our instructors, even if they carve all the time at other programs or at home. To earn their certification, they will need to recite the 5 Knife Safety Rules and pass an onsite knife skills test. We will provide knives for certified students with permission to carve if/when we do a carving activity.

The 5 Knife Safety Rules

1. Sharp Knife = Safe Knife | Dull Knife = Dangerous Knife. Most parents seem to think that this can't possibly apply to kids and that their kid will be safer with a dull knife. Please don't do this. A sharp knife will be more efficient to use, it will require less force, and if it slips it won't fly out of control. ([Learn how to sharpen here.](#))
2. Stay Seated While Carving. This creates a solid and steady foundation, and avoids the easy temptation to move around with an open knife. Focus all your attention on what you are doing.
3. Create, and Maintain, Your "Blood Circle" A blood circle is defined as anywhere you can reach with the combined length of your arm and your knife blade. Your blood circle is anywhere that you could accidentally draw blood on someone else. While carving, make sure that there is no one else within your blood circle! Teach others to respect yours, as well.
4. Cut Away From All Body Parts (and stop cutting if you look away). Note that we didn't say "always cut away from yourself." It is easy to be cutting away from your torso but still be cutting toward a finger or even your leg while sitting down. Also, stop cutting if you need to look away, like when talking with someone.
5. Close or Sheathe Knives Not In Use. Knives that are left with the blade exposed pose an obvious hazard. Whenever you are finished using your knife, even if it is only for a few moments, it needs to be put into its sheath.

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EdenAcres
Environmental Education



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Student Code of Conduct & Consequences

The foundation of the student code of conduct and consequence policy at EdenAcres is to encourage positive behavior in the individual which will support a positive experience for everyone.

EdenAcres provides a supportive and nurturing environment where communication from each student is valued and encouraged. We create an environment where positive behavior is reinforced and where inappropriate behavior is not necessary. We remind students to use words to express what they want, what they need, and how they feel. We guide them to treat themselves and others with respect, and we facilitate verbal problem solving when students are in conflict. We practice restorative justice and cooperative discipline models of addressing challenging behavior.

Students and families are expected to treat all life and those things which support life with kindness and respect. Killing of any living creature or the destruction of the life supportive features of the forest is unacceptable, we only use and collect materials from the forest that are dead, down, and on the ground. We strive to teach gentle loving-kindness towards the earth and its inhabitants.

We believe that every child deserves access to learning and the natural world. In the case of an initial break of the student code of conduct, we will work with the child/ren and guardians to create an action plan for ensuring that the behavior will not be repeated. If the behavior persists, stronger consequences, such as suspension and expulsion will be considered.

Behavior Management: Levels of Action

At Eden Acres we use a cooperative behavior management system to address inappropriate student behavior. This system has different levels that allow teachers, staff, and students to work together to correct inappropriate behavior and facilitate a safe learning experience for everyone at EdenAcres. Acceptable student behavior should reflect dispositions and practice of stewardship of human and natural communities. Here's a description of how the system works:

1. Setting expectations clearly and early. This allows students to know what the limits are and engage with questions before the activity even begins.
2. Redirect to purposeful activity. If the behavior persists, we have a private conversation and problem-solve with the student.



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3. Set clear guidelines. We work with the student to make agreements about their behavior, this includes agreeing on potential consequences/outcomes for different choices.
4. Check in with the student periodically.
5. If the behavior persists in a situation where these steps have been followed and we are still facing behavioral challenges, we would focus on our three step behavioral interventions as outlined below.

If these initial steps have been taken and student behavior is unchanging and continues to be disruptive, then we will use the three step approach described below:

Level 1: Verbal warnings and possible send home.

- First verbal warning. This warning will help the student understand why their behavior was inappropriate and why it must not be repeated. EdenAcres staff will be notified that the warning has been given and it will be recorded in a behavior log to keep all instructors informed about student discipline.
- Second verbal warning. The student's instructor and/or school director will sit down with the student to discuss and may write down details about the inappropriate behavior and the possible alternatives if the behavior is not corrected. At this time the instructor and student may work together to modify the agreed upon consequence(s) for the inappropriate behavior. They will also discuss ways that staff can help the student make positive changes in their behavior. Parents will be notified of students' behavior after two warnings.
- After three warnings, the student will be sent home and we will have a conversation between parents, teacher, school administrator, and possibly the student. Our goal in this conversation is to identify the behavior that is causing a disruption in the group, and to make an agreement with the student about expectations we have for being present in the program. This conversation may include steps that we can take to help them meet expectations, as well as ways that they are going to adjust behavior so they can continue to participate.

Level 2: Student misses a day of class. This may be called for when a student continues to demonstrate unsafe or disruptive behaviors despite parent conversations. This will also happen if a student cannot follow agreements made with parents and teacher(s). Previous behavior plans will be revised as needed and agreed upon by the student and parent before returning to EdenAcres programs.

Level 3: If after multiple suspensions from school the student continues to exhibit behaviors that would result in further disciplinary actions, EdenAcres reserves the right to expel students from the Forest and Farm School to maintain the integrity and safety of our



programs. Depending on the severity of behavior, the student may be asked to not return to any EdenAcres programs.

Serious Misconduct

Violence, fighting, aggressive and/or threatening language and/or behavior is never acceptable. Consequences for behavior that does not adhere to the student code of conduct could result in any one or combination of the following consequences: community service; letter of apology; suspension; expulsion.

We reserve the right to remove kids from our programs if their behavior endangers the physical and/or emotional safety of the other participants.

A Note from the Director

Each fall, as I walk with my students through the green, lush, moss covered forest or harvest peas and carrots from the garden we planted, I'm brought back to the countless hours I spent exploring our family forest and farm when I was growing up. I remember riding through the garden in a wheelbarrow alongside the bounty I had just helped my grandfather harvest. We'd stop to say hi to the pigs underneath the big hazelnut tree and toss them some of the sunburnt tomatoes and wilted lettuce. Grandpa took the fresh-picked veggies inside to make dinner while I ran along to play in my secret place beneath my favorite tree in the forest. As a child I spent hours turning over rocks, discovering entire tiny worlds underneath or climbing to the top of the tree where I often saw a hawk perch, gazing over the fields in search for his next meal. I was the hawk when I perched atop that tree. The world was magical, full of excitement and possibilities. I could do anything, be anything! These are the moments that happen when children are out of doors, in nature, exploring the world. A childhood spent outdoors helps to develop independence, confidence, resilience, creative thinking, healthy habits, and so much more.

As an educator I have personally seen the positive effects that outdoor, experiential education has on children. Take for example little Adrian - on his first day he arrived a bit late. He was timid and peeked out from behind his mom's legs when I kneeled to introduce myself. The other children, the self-proclaimed "Wolfpack," were busy dancing and singing as they mixed the cob with their bare feet that we would later use to create a half moon wall beneath the big douglas firs. The structure, we hoped, would serve as one of our outdoor

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classroom spaces and help protect us from the harsh winter wind. A silent tear rolled down Adrian's cheek as he looked up at me. His mom later informed me that they had just moved from Los Angeles and that he had very little experience with the natural world. He was scared of mud and worms and outside. He preferred video games and movies. But Adrian's mom knew that her son was missing some of the things that had made her own childhood so wonderful, like building forts, finding a ladybug hatch, or discovering the sweet smells the summer breeze carries, so she encouraged him to stay with us. The first couple weeks had their challenges, but by winter, Adrian was leading a team of fellow first graders in mudslide races. Not only did he learn about water, soil, and biology, he developed people skills and personal attitudes that will be a part of him for the rest of his life.

In the past decade, the benefits of connecting children and nature have been researched and documented in numerous scientific studies and publications. Collectively, the research shows that a child's academic, physical, social, emotional, and psychological well-being are positively affected by regular, daily contact with nature. From improving eyesight to reducing the symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder to improving a child's academic performance, exposure to nature benefits the whole child. In contrast to these findings, children are spending ever less time outdoors and are becoming increasingly attached to the virtual world of video screens. A national organization, No Child Left Inside, is working to counteract that trend through promoting legislation and funding to support outdoor experiences for K-12 students. As well, many states have published environmental literacy plans and are beginning to implement them in their schools. EdenAcres Environmental Education is responding to the need for experienced outdoor educators by working locally to provide teacher training and outdoor experiences for learners of all ages in our community.

Peacefully,
Fallon Harris

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