

# Everwild

## Nature Preschool:

### Where Little Minds Flourish in Nature's Wonderland

Everwild Nature Preschool is a Nature Immersion Preschool that welcomes children ages 3-6 years old with a maximum capacity of 14 preschoolers. We operate under a Family Childcare License by the State of Minnesota through Olmsted County Community Services. A copy of the Licensing Rule may be obtained from Olmsted County Community Services-Child Care Licensing, or you may review our copy. We are mandated reporters and required to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

**What is a Nature Preschool?** Nature Schools, also called forest schools, are unique because they are a type of early childhood education held mainly outdoors in all weather. The curriculum is primarily play-based focusing on exploration, experimentation, collaboration, and creativity.

**Why Nature Preschool?** A nature-based preschool combines environmental education with early childhood education to create meaningful outdoor experiences that are developmentally appropriate. Exposure to nature has been shown repeatedly to be critical to our physical, social, emotional, and intellectual health.

**Experience:** With over 25 combined years of experience in the Early Childhood Education Field, our goal is to provide a supportive, nurturing, educational environment that is developmentally appropriate for each child's intellectual, emotional, and social needs. Through daily positive interactions with peers and staff, our goal is for the children to build caring and trusting relationships. Each child is unique developmentally and encouraged to flourish and grow at their individual pace. We are facilitators of learning and will provide learning opportunities and guidance for the children as they actively navigate and propel their education through curiosity, questions, reading, crafts, exploration, and a variety of small and large motor activities.

**Hours and Days of Operation:** Everwild will operate as a preschool. We will follow the Rochester Public School calendar. We open the Tuesday after Labor Day and conclude our school year the Friday after Memorial Day. We offer morning and afternoon sessions Monday through Friday. Morning session drop-off is 8:45am. Pick-up for the Morning session is 11:30am-11:45am. Afternoon session drop-off is 11:45 am. Afternoon session pick-up is 3:00pm-3:15pm. Our full day program begins at 8:45am and ends at 3:15pm. There will be a \$1 per minute late pick up fee charged for pick-ups occurring after the pick-up times.

**Tuition:** Tuition for our programming is as follows (per Month):

#### Full Days

M/W/F Full Days \$740 T/TH Full Days \$550 Five Full Days \$1290

#### Half Days Mornings

M/W/F Half Days \$320 T/TH Half Days \$255 Five Half Days \$575

#### Lunch Bunch and Afternoon Half Day

T/TH \$315. M/W/F \$410

Tuition Invoices will be sent out by the first of each month for that month through Brightwheel. Tuition payments are due on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Acceptable forms of payment are autopay through Brightwheel with a credit card or debit card or directly to Everwild School by check.

**Nutritious Meals and Snacks:** We will provide a snack during the morning session and the afternoon session that will consist of at least 2 of the food groups. If you choose for your child to take part in our Lunch Bunch option between 11:45 and 12:15pm, we do not provide lunch. Parents are responsible to pack a balanced lunch for their child. We will provide milk.

**Food Allergies:** If your child has a food allergy, please let us know. An action plan for emergency care must be completed by the family physician. When a child has a severe food allergy (extreme and rapid reactions, or are allergic to many foods, etc.) or those requiring a special diet (gluten free, strict vegan, kosher, etc.) we reserve the right to request that families bring their child's food that has been prepared according to their individual needs.

**Birthdays:** We are happy to celebrate birthdays with the children. Feel free to bring a commercially prepared treat to share with everyone.

**Napping/Rest Time:** In the afternoons, children will have a quiet time where they can either nap or engage in quiet activities. If your child has given up naps at home, they will not be required to lay down unless they ask to do so. Please communicate with us and let us know your preferences regarding nap time. For example, your child may still need a nap, but you might ask us to wake them up after one hour. If your child still naps, or you would like them to nap, please provide them with a rest mat. Rest mats with attached pillows and blankets can be found at several different stores, but here is a link on Amazon that shows our preferred rest mat:

[https://www.amazon.com/Wake-Cloud-Removable-Kindergarten-Microfiber/dp/B09YCV2PJ8/ref=sr\\_1\\_7?crid=NO9OQIB4CXCQ&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.875ySe27hWGABT7NMbMuV92OuN03MO4qo5M9IYfZ5QoEBQPI08uWcmG7nO1mCzfi48t2xtg\\_X6EF4BHnrf3-lnq1bMLk4fhKD7aIt\\_YtcPWTxSJP2vQ6TMwECEhKlxYiV\\_tfb3WYNoRdGB9CsGVvi2Sgao1ja8Q7S9gruNGqfApUq2n18phlbvSLI1WHas0ymt7tM5iqiJUnphoUobiEn2pvzeTlgyl8AbMp6xvcXWz0OKMSuJQEi0lNq8Qiceollp1HoMySYKGFk0K3TSeDgSYaR3oxe1rIt\\_v95OErN8.Qg0C1zzthcRMZcYdrblv8W3Wh8OKouViVEgoBYbvD74&dib\\_tag=se&keywords=wake+in+cloud+nap+mat&qid=1722792299&srefix=wake+i%2Caps%2C222&sr=8-7](https://www.amazon.com/Wake-Cloud-Removable-Kindergarten-Microfiber/dp/B09YCV2PJ8/ref=sr_1_7?crid=NO9OQIB4CXCQ&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.875ySe27hWGABT7NMbMuV92OuN03MO4qo5M9IYfZ5QoEBQPI08uWcmG7nO1mCzfi48t2xtg_X6EF4BHnrf3-lnq1bMLk4fhKD7aIt_YtcPWTxSJP2vQ6TMwECEhKlxYiV_tfb3WYNoRdGB9CsGVvi2Sgao1ja8Q7S9gruNGqfApUq2n18phlbvSLI1WHas0ymt7tM5iqiJUnphoUobiEn2pvzeTlgyl8AbMp6xvcXWz0OKMSuJQEi0lNq8Qiceollp1HoMySYKGFk0K3TSeDgSYaR3oxe1rIt_v95OErN8.Qg0C1zzthcRMZcYdrblv8W3Wh8OKouViVEgoBYbvD74&dib_tag=se&keywords=wake+in+cloud+nap+mat&qid=1722792299&srefix=wake+i%2Caps%2C222&sr=8-7)

**Non-Discrimination Practices:** Everwild does not discriminate based on race, creed, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or sexual orientation.

**Illness and Exclusion Guidelines:** To contain and prevent the spread of illnesses, children with the following symptoms will be excluded from attending classes.

- A temperature of 100 degrees or above
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Strep throat (must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to class)
- Head lice
- Other contagious illnesses, as the provider deems appropriate.

If your child has any of these symptoms, please contact us, but do not bring him/her to school.

If your child develops any of these symptoms during the day, we will call you and expect you to pick up the child as soon as possible. This is to prevent exposing other children and our staff to illness.

Immunization records must be updated as shots are administered. We require a printout from the clinic.

You must notify us immediately if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness or parasitic infestation. We will notify you if your child has been exposed to any illnesses.

We must have your permission to obtain emergency medical care or treatment. This will only be used if we cannot reach you or if you are delayed in arriving at the emergency facility. We will make every effort to call and contact you.

Written permission to administer prescription and non-prescription medication is required.

**Fire Drills, Storm Drill & Evacuation:** We will conduct monthly fire and storm drills. During severe storms, or civil defense warnings, children will take shelter in the basement of our school until the danger has passed. Should it be necessary to evacuate the school due to fire, gas leak or other situations that make remaining in the school unsafe, the children will relocate to the far Northeast corner of the property.

**Transportation:** We do not transport children at any time.

**Custody Arrangements:** When parents do not reside in one household, the parent listed on the registration form will be considered the child's primary parent. We will communicate with the primary parent. Everwild will only release the child's information listed on the registration form unless legal documentation is provided. Requests for releasing a child's records must be made in writing.

**No-Smoking, Substance Abuse Policy:** Smoking is not allowed in or around Everwild Nature Preschool at any time ever. Everwild prohibits employees, helpers, substitutes, and volunteers, when directly responsible for the children, from abusing prescription medication or being in any manner under the influence of a chemical or alcohol, to the extent that the use or abuse has or may have a negative effect on the ability of the person to give care or is apparent during school hours. We will train employees, helpers, substitutes, and volunteers about this substance use policy.

**Alternative/ Substitute Caregivers:** We may use a substitute for planned absences or in an emergency. A criminal background check is completed for all substitutes. All substitutes have completed the required training. We will try to provide advance notice if there will be a substitute providing care for your child(ren).

**Personal Belongings:** Please do not bring toys or personal items from home. We will not be responsible for anything that is lost or broken.

**Pets:** We currently do not have any pets in the school facility.

**Insurance Coverage:** We carry liability insurance on our school. A current certificate of coverage for insurance is available for inspection upon request.

**Behavior Guidance/Discipline:** Discipline is a learning process and not a punishment. Misbehavior will be handled in a firm, consistent, and POSITIVE manner. Some methods used would be:

- Providing children with the reasons for limitations
- Giving positively worded directions
- Helping children to constructively express their feelings and frustrations to resolve conflict.
- Arranging equipment, materials, activities, and schedules in a way that promotes desirable behavior.
- Using fair, consistent, and developmentally appropriate limits tailored to the child's level of understanding and development.

No child will be ashamed, humiliated, or handled roughly. No corporal punishment will be used, even at the parent's request. Our philosophy on discipline is to help children gain respect for themselves, their peers, and their caregivers and teach constructive and positive alternatives when conflicts arise. The most honest form of discipline is the children watching and learning moral awareness from us daily.

We also have a separate Behavior Guidance and Outdoor Play Policies and Procedures Attachment at the end of this document outlining our policies and procedures on when children need extra support in the nature school setting, and our thoughts and beliefs on outdoor play, stick play, and rough and tumble play. Please read through these and ask any clarifying questions you may have.

**Termination and Notice Procedure:** If a Parent chooses to terminate the care for their child, a written notice of termination shall be provided by the parent or guardian a minimum of two weeks prior to the children's final day of attendance. A refund will not be given for the month's tuition already paid.

**Grievance Procedure:** If a parent is dissatisfied with any aspect of service their child is receiving, they may contact us through email, text, or in person to schedule a time to meet and discuss concerns.

**Communication:** We will communicate with parents and guardians through email, texts, and monthly newsletters. We will have conferences twice a year, once in the fall, and once in the spring. We understand that you may have questions, concerns, or may need to let us know of schedule changes throughout the day and therefore welcome you to message us through the Brightwheel App or email. We will do our best to respond in a timely manner, however, the children and their safety is our primary focus and priority.

## **Clothing**

**Clothing:** As a Nature preschool, we spend most of our day outdoors immersed in nature. Children must have appropriate clothing and outdoor gear for the weather each day. Children can happily enjoy the outdoors for many hours, even in wet and wintry weather, if equipped with the right clothing to keep them warm and dry. Please provide an extra change of clothing in their backpack as well.

**Bare feet:** Nature also offers a full sensory experience; therefore, we will allow the children to experience it with their bare feet on some occasions. We will let the children go barefoot when it is at least 55 degrees outside. We will also have conversations about the safety risks of going barefoot outside (sticks, rocks,

thistles, pine needles, etc.). If you, as parents, feel strongly against this, please tell us, and we will respect your wishes.

## Outdoor Gear & Layering Guidelines

### Just a couple notes first:

- If these brands are out of your price range, check out secondhand shops or resale sites online--**they do not need to be brand new to keep your child warm!** Just check the labels to make sure they are 100% wool or synthetic.
- One full “nature school” outfit is plenty—we do not mind if they come to school wearing the same thing every day! Do not feel the need to buy multiples of these items unless you want to.
- You will see the phrase “**NO COTTON**” repeated often below—that is because cotton absorbs sweat/moisture and when wet, does not insulate! During the colder months, please do not send your child in cotton sweatpants/sweatshirts, as it will not do a respectable job keeping them warm and dry while they are busy exploring and playing outside.
- **Please label your child’s clothing!** This makes it much easier for us to return your clothing to you when it gets lost. You can purchase [custom name labels](#) or just write your child’s name on their clothes.

### PLEASE ABIDE BY THESE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES! VERY IMPORTANT!!

- 1) Required wool socks - Any time the weather is below 40 degrees; we will be requiring the students to wear wool socks. These can be purchased inexpensively on Amazon, or at Scheels. We have found that other socks just don’t keep those little toes warm enough, despite the winter boots.
- 2) Required rain pants - We will be requiring each student to purchase a set of rain gear. This can be a full body rain suit, or rain pants. This will help reduce the amount of clothing changes that are needed, which will free up time for more enjoyable activities :) As always, we will have extras available if you ever forget them at home.
- 3) Pull-on Boots - if possible, we HIGHLY ENCOURAGE you to purchase pull on winter boots for your child (BOG boots are fabulous!) This will allow your child to gain independence as they learn to slip those puppies on and off all by themselves! Fleet Farm usually has a good selection of kids boots, too. Western Chief brand has pull-ons like BOG)

## SEASONAL LAYERING

### AUTUMN

dry 40-65 degrees

- thermal base layer
- fleece jacket
- fleece pants
- light wool socks
- fleece stocking cap
- rain boots
- sneakers

## **WINTER**

**snow 0-40 degrees**

- thermal base layer
- fleece jacket
- fleece pants
- thick wool socks
- winter boots

## **SPRING**

**wet 20-65 degrees**

- thermal base layer
- fleece jacket
- fleece pants
- stocking cap
- light wool socks

**rain boots**

## **SUMMER**

**hot 60-95 degrees**

- t-shirt
- lightweight pants
- light weight long-sleeve shirt
- baseball cap
- any socks
- water resistant closed toed shoes
- rain boots

## **THERMAL BASE LAYER**

Worn next to the skin, keeping the body warm and dry, wicking away any moisture. Think of this layer in terms of a thinner wool or high-tech poly material. I am big fans of merino wool thanks to their cooling/heating properties. I recommend opting for stretchy, lightweight base layer they can wear inside then translate to outdoor play. This will include long sleeves, pants and socks that fit snug.

## **BASE LAYER + SOCKS RECOMMENDATIONS:**

[Lands End - Thermal Base Layer](#)

[Iksplorer - Base Set](#)

[Amazon Essentials Thermal Toddler Set](#)

[Smartwool Socks](#)

[DarnTough Socks](#)

Good article on socks: ['Why You Shouldn't Wear Cotton Socks'](#)

## **FLEECE INSULATING LAYER**

The second layer acts as extra insulation between the base and the outer layer. Mid layers are the part of the

layering that really can be “fudged” more than any other layer. Fleece, down, or wool is best, but it does not need to be top of the line or super technical to be effective. This will include jacket, pants, and stocking cap.

#### **FLEECE JACKET & PANTS RECOMMENDATIONS:**

[Columbia Fleece Jacket](#)

[Patagonia Fleece Jacket](#)

[Polarn O. Pyret Wool Zip Up](#)

[LL Bean Fleece Pant](#)

[Lands End Fleece Sweatpant](#)

[Patagonia Baby Overalls](#)

#### **FOOTWEAR**

Boots that really keep kids’ feet toasty in frigid conditions are a worthwhile investment! Try to pick one that has good tread and can handle both ice and snow. You can even opt for rain boots that double as winter boots for the changing conditions.

Have your child wear their thickest socks when trying on winter & rain boots. You want to be sure there is enough room in the toe area for circulation.

#### **WATER / WINTER BOOT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

[Muck Boot Hale Multi-Season](#)

[BOGS Classic Winter Boots](#)

[Kamik Snobuster2 Snow Boot](#)

[Hunter First Classic Rain Boots](#)

[Amoji Baby / Kids Easy On Rain Shoe Boots](#)

[Buoy Rain Boots](#)

#### **SNEAKER / WATER SANDAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

[Merrell Kid's Moab Waterproof Hiking Sneaker](#)

[KEEN Kids Newport H2 Closed Toe Water Sandal](#)

[Mishansha Athletic Hiking Shoes](#)

## **Behavior Guidance Policies and Procedures**

At Everwild Nature School our behavior guidance policies are based on the belief that:

- Children are doing the best they can with the tools and skills they have available to them in the moment.
- When children experience challenges, it means that they lack the skills to do differently, not that they lack the motivation to do differently.
- Children are good inside, even when they are having a tough time.

Our behavior policies and procedures encourage positive, healthy, and safe interactions between children and adults. Everwild abides by the guidelines from MN Statute 9503.0055 regarding the development and implementation of written policies and procedures for Behavior Guidance.

Everwild behavior guidance policies and procedures:

- Ensure that our staff provide all children with positive role models of acceptable behaviors
- Are tailored to be developmentally appropriate for 3–5-year-old children
- Redirect children and groups of children away from problems toward constructive activity to reduce conflict
- Teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behaviors to reduce conflict
- Protect the safety of children and staff persons
- Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior

In general, teachers enforce ground rules, employ logical consequences, and deal with specific problems in a caring, consistent, and positive manner. Teachers also emphasize positive behaviors, offer reasonable choices, recognize feelings, and make clear when a child's behavior is unacceptable. The staff will not bribe, use threats, moralize, shout, or humiliate children. If a behavior becomes dangerous, destructive, and/or disruptive then a staff member will intervene to protect people and property in a way that protects a child's self-esteem and helps them understand the problem with the behavior and practice positive ways of solving the situation. Different children and different situations will call for different responses. Physical force (i.e., holding onto a child or carrying a child) is only used to contain a child if necessary to protect the child or others from harm. We are all on the same team and we all want what is best for your child. We are also committed to the safety of our children and staff. This means a teacher may share information with you that

might be hard to hear, for example if your child bites or hits another child or runs from the group. We will work together to keep your child and other children safe and prevent the same thing from happening in the future.

## **When a Child Needs Extra Support**

Sometimes children have ongoing challenges that require an increased amount of staff support, such as a pattern of biting, kicking, or hitting. Other examples are challenges are; joining the rest of the class during transitions, running from the group, hiding from teachers, or refusing to get dressed for the outdoors. Sometimes these challenges can be supported by a Positive Support Plan created by the teachers and family. Sometimes, the teachers will suggest or request a referral for an evaluation. A child may also receive a referral for an evaluation as part of their Early Childhood Screening or through a Help Me Grow referral from the family or teachers. A Help Me Grow referral goes to ISD 535 staff, who then reach out to the family and teachers to learn more and coordinate an evaluation if deemed necessary. Evaluations often include observations of the child in their classroom setting with peers and one to three sessions of one-on-one testing. Evaluations can be scheduled to happen as part of the child's Everwild day. The Everwild classroom space will be made available for ISD 535 to use for testing, providing services, and for IEP meetings.

When a child regularly needs additional or one on one support, the following general procedure will be followed:

1. Teachers will tell your family about the challenges
2. Preschool staff will document patterns related to the child's challenging behaviors and what might be making the behavior happen (i.e., transitions, hunger, being tired, changes at home, etc.)
3. Teachers and family members will meet to discuss:
  - a. What the teachers are seeing at school
  - b. To learn from the family:
    - i. Do you see these behaviors at home?
    - ii. What strategies, words, and/or phrases do you use to help the child navigate these times?
  - c. To make a plan to work together to support the child
4. Teachers will develop a Positive Guidance Plan (PGP) based on their observations and your family's input that lays out specific strategies to support the child and the plan for regular communication with your family about the child's time at Everwild

5. The PGP may also include a plan for when the family and teachers will reach out for additional support to any of the following organizations:

- a. Center for Inclusive Childcare
- b. Help Me Grow
- c. ISD 535 early childhood screening
- d. other community resources

6. Note: if a child has an IEP or other specialized learning plan or if an IEP is developed, teachers will follow that plan as their primary support document.

Everwild's intent is to follow best practice recommendations and keep children in preschool to develop skills. However, you may be asked to remove your child for the rest of the session for the safety of your child, the other children, and/or the teachers. When a child's behavior results in either of the following situations, the preschool administrators will meet with the child's family and Everwild staff to discuss termination of childcare services:

- Despite intervention as described above, the child's behavior poses an ongoing threat to the physical and emotional safety of other children and/or themselves and staff can no longer assure the safety of all children in their care, and/or
- Through extensive attempts at intervening with any specific behavior, Everwild has exhausted the available and reasonable program, staff, community, and professional resources and/or staff is only able to meet the needs of that individual child through frequent or persistent one-on-one care. While this compromises their ability to adequately meet the needs of all the children in their care, it also indicates that Everwild is no longer the most appropriate environment for the child.

## **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor Play at Everwild we are all about being outside for child-directed, unstructured play. We spend as much time as possible each preschool session learning and playing outdoors. It is Everwild's policy that all children who are well enough to attend preschool are well enough to participate in outdoor activities and play. In fact, the MN Department of Human Service Licensing requires a daily dose of fresh outdoor air for young children. If children are dressed appropriately and are well enough to attend preschool, weather conditions will not pose an illness risk.

We go outside every day. We rely on you to make sure your child is prepared to stay warm and dry for extended periods of time outdoors each day with lots of weather appropriate layers. Teachers make sure children are dressed in clothing appropriate for the weather. Time outdoors will be appropriately delayed and/or limited in cold or severe weather based on the forecast from the National Weather Service and the judgment of preschool staff.

### **Nature Play**

At Everwild, nature play is the primary focus of our time outside. Time in nature is critical for a child's healthy development. Playing, learning, and exploring in the woods and outdoor classroom of Everwild provides a safe space for children to learn how to assess physical risk and build resilience, an environment to nurture good mental health, promotes overall physical and mental health through vigorous activity, and gives children ample opportunities to build relationships with other children and their teachers. Children at Everwild will participate in nature play activities including climbing trees, running through the forest, balancing on and jumping from rocks and logs, playing with rocks and sticks, jumping in mud puddles, sledding, playing on ice, exploring in the woods, and much more.

### **Stick Play**

Nature play also includes stick play. Many of our preschoolers spend the entire outdoor time with a stick in their hands. Sticks are wonderful loose parts and can be anything the child can imagine such as a sword, wand, shovel, or shooter. Stick play is an important form of expression for young children. We coach children throughout the year to use and control their sticks in safe ways. Everwild staff monitor the play and help the children adjust the boundaries of stick play depending on how the children are responding to one another. While playing with sticks, children are learning that their classmates need to feel safe in the play, no matter what the play scenario is. We may redirect children who are

using sticks in less safe ways to play with their sticks in a different way and do not allow children who are hitting other children with sticks to continue playing with sticks.

### **Rough-and-Tumble Play**

Children at Everwild engage in rough-and-tumble play. We believe in the value of exuberant, boisterous, rough-and-tumble play to a child's overall development. This vigorous, big-body play allows children opportunities to use language—both verbal and nonverbal—and learn how to negotiate, take turns, wait, compromise, sometimes dominate and sometimes hold back, and make and follow rules. Children are learning about cause and effect and developing empathy. Big body play also supports optimum physical development because it is so vigorous and children, since they enjoy it so much, tend to engage in it for a long time. There are many ways that we support safety in rough-and-tumble play including teaching children how to communicate that they want rough-and-tumble play to stop, monitoring (and guiding, if needed) the rough-and-tumble play in progress, designating safe areas where rough-and-tumble play can occur and areas where it cannot occur, and working with children to help them learn their own boundaries and process the interactions occurring during rough-and-tumble play.