

EXPLORING NATURE: OUTDOOR LEARNING PROGRAM

This seasonal, month-long, inquiry-based program is designed to provide children ages 4 to 8 years old with meaningful opportunities to explore and learn through nature. Time spent in nature has been shown to have dramatic benefits for children's social, psychological, and physical well-being. Through this learning program led by our Registered Early Childhood Educators and Ontario Certified Teachers, we aim to help children strengthen their connection with the natural world and foster stewardship of the environment. Our learning program includes connections to the Ontario Science and Technology Curriculum for grades 1 to 4. Registration is for 4 weeks and includes one freshly prepared plant-based meal per week. As the majority of the day is spent outside, children must come prepared for all types of weather.

TO REGISTER

We are offering our Outdoor Learning Program on a monthly (4-week) basis.

4-week long registration (either for session 1 or session 2) opens on Tuesday February 11th, 2025 at 10:00 am.

We use the University of Guelph OpenEd online registration system for our Outdoor Learning Program. Register here:

<https://tinyurl.com/bdfeyrb4>

Please email

outdoor@uoguelph.ca with any questions or if you need any assistance.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Drop Off - 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM
Programming - 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Pick Up - 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM

DATES OFFERED

Session 1	June 30th – July 25th 2025 (excluding July 1st)	\$1, 425.00
Session 2	July 28th – August 22nd 2025 (excluding August 4th)	\$1, 425.00

***Registration includes one plant-based lunch per week.**



CHILD CARE &
LEARNING CENTRE
STUDENT AFFAIRS

20 Arboretum Road
Guelph, ON, N1G 2W1
Phone: 519-824-4120 Ext. 52682
Email: outdoor@uoguelph.ca

OUTDOOR LEARNING PROGRAM: MORE INFORMATION

PHILOSOPHY OF OUR PROGRAM

This program is designed to offer responsive outdoor programming that meets the criteria for public school-aged curriculum. We know that the outdoor environment is a powerful educator; as such, we aim to connect with the land regularly and are guided by nature's affordances. Our pedagogical commitments are such that we allow our learning to unfold organically in response to the lifecycles, habitats, and weather patterns we encounter. Although our "base camp" is hosted behind Alumni House at the Child Care and Learning Centre, we intentionally explore various areas of the Arboretum and the University of Guelph campus to interact with diverse plants, animals, habitats, technology, humans, and more. We have a community agreement (code of conduct) that includes respect, purpose, and permission when engaging with the natural world and each other. We operate from the knowledge we hold related to the benefits of unstructured play, risky play, loose parts play, constructive/destructive play, barefoot play, and water play. We also believe that there are rich learning experiences afforded by many weather conditions, including rain, heat, and mud, and we ask that children arrive prepared to be outdoors in these conditions. However, we monitor our activity in relation to temperature, humidex, thunder, lightening, wind, rainfall, air quality, and air pollution to make daily adjustments to support each child's health and safety. Further, this year, we are not providing daily prepared meals and snacks each day this summer. This is due to the limited operational capacity of our on-site kitchen, to reduce the food wasted accumulated during previous summers, to ensure children are nourished with familiar foods to sustain their stamina for participation in the program, and as a means to enhance our explorations. Instead, we will provide 1 freshly prepared plant-based meal per week and each child will need to bring litterless lunches and snacks that can be brought on our Arboretum excursions. We hope that knowing this philosophy ahead of time helps to determine if our program is a good fit for you and your child(ren).

REGISTRATION DETAILS

We offer four-week long sessions because this endured time together enhances the explorations and connections within our learning community. We eagerly invite registration of children who will thrive in an intensive outdoor program for 4 weeks. Please note that registration is a competitive process as it is a time-based, first-come, first-served model. There are steps that will need to be completed ahead of time in order for successful and timely registration to occur on February 11th 2025. If significant socioeconomic hardship or disadvantage prevents you from accessing our registration model, please contact us (outdoor@uoguelph.ca) for information about an alternative registration process by January 24th, 2025.



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