

Learning, naturally.



forest preschool

THE REWILDING SCHOOL

An all-outdoor forest setting for your preschooler,
right here in Westchester County.



Parent Guide 2023-24



We are an outdoor, nature-based preschool located on the ancestral land of the Wappinger and Lenape, where children learn and grow through story-based imaginative learning, multi-sensory exploration, and age-appropriate social development. Through immersive exposure to the natural world, students foster connections to the land, each other, and themselves that form the building blocks for a lifetime of learning. If you are looking for an all-outdoor setting for your preschooler to explore their imagination and build connections that last a lifetime, reach out and see if the Rewilding Forest Preschool is right for your child!



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Over the course of the year in our outdoor classroom, your preschooler will be encouraged to **dig** for earthworms • search for sticks • **observe** chipmunks and squirrels • listen to birds • **discover** new habitats • help build a campfire • **track** woodland critters • splash in puddles • catch a fish • **play** in the snow • **taste** foraged food • shoot a (soft-tipped) bow & arrow • wear band-aids • **build** shelters • climb trees • create leaf art • **tell stories** • **experiment** with new skills and materials • take risks • meet new critters • **make friends**

Schedule

Our Forest Preschool program offers a choice of mornings (9:15-12:00) or afternoons (1:00 -3:45) from September 6, 2023, to June 14, 2024. Students may register for two, three, or five days a week.

Example Morning Session

9:15 **Freeplay** *Staff lead bird beak game.*

9:30 **Snack and Story** *Kids sit on stumps and eat snack while listening to story about bird nests.*

9:45 **Adventure** *Group outing to build bird nests in grove of small trees away from tent, with opportunities to play along the way.*

11:30 **Snack and Story** *Kids return to tent for a second snack, and story about bird migration.*

11:45 **Freeplay** *Kids play freely, often inspired by the day's events.*

12:00 **Child Pickup** *Teachers greet parents and share stories of the day.*



Staff

Our teachers aren't just great preschool educators, they are also trained naturalists with an unwavering passion for the outdoors. Our teachers utilize Coyote Mentoring to encourage kids to make their own discoveries and learn from their own experiences; hands-on exploration and gentle, leading questions help kids dive deep and walk away excited. All our teachers pass background checks and are COVID-vaccinated, and an annual staff orientation ensures that they are prepared in safety and first aid training, teaching techniques, naturalist skills and ancestral crafts.

Locations

Each site has an open-air tent, providing light cover from rainy weather and ventilation on all four sides. Under the tent is our “classroom” with sit stumps, books and toys, and a central fire.

Brinton Brook (Croton-on-Hudson) is a hidden gem of 156 acres with over four miles of hiking trails. There's a variety of habitats here from forests and meadows to creeks and boulders to explore. Some of our favorite local



animal finds are turtles, frogs, garter snakes, earthworms, deer, hawks, and squirrels.

Marsh Sanctuary (Mt Kisco) boasts 156 acres with a variety of habitats from forests and meadows to marshes, ponds, open fields, and boulders. There is also a community garden where we plant and grow vegetables to bring home and enjoy. Some of our favorite animal finds here are herons, turtles, frogs, fish, earthworms, hawks, deer, foxes, and the occasional nocturnal bobcat (as seen on trail cameras).



Equipment

Your child needs to come to preschool every day with clothing appropriate for the weather, a small backpack for snacks and water, and appropriate footwear. A full list of recommended clothing is provided upon registration.

COVID Protocols

All of our teachers are vaccinated for COVID. Please note that masks are optional for our students except in specific cases. These are outlined on our website at:

rewildingschool.com/covid

Safety

The outdoors can be unpredictable, but that is exactly what makes it **the perfect learning environment for young kids**. Fun, immersive activities may lead to the occasional scratch or insect bite. These minor injuries are part of a life well-lived, and our staff is trained to manage activities safely, with appropriate levels of risk. Through our week-long staff orientations each season, first aid/CPR training, and weekly staff meetings, we ensure that our students are guided in age-appropriate and risk-appropriate outdoors fun.

Food

Parents are asked to pack snacks every day that their kids will enjoy. Occasionally, we will also taste wild foods that have been properly identified and prepared. In the case of a food allergy, we may ask that children not share food, or that certain food items are not brought to school. Please note that we do not have a kitchen, and cannot heat lunch items regularly.



A note about ticks. Tick bites can transmit several diseases, and are a fact of life when you play in the woods. Parents are encouraged to take whatever precautions they feel are necessary to avoid tick bites, and are asked to do a full-body tick check every day after school.



FAQ's

How old are Forest Preschool students? Our students are 3 to 5 at the start of the school year.

Does my child need to be potty trained? Yes. Prior to the start of school, your child must be potty trained.

How many other kids will be in the class? Your child's class will be no more than 10 kids, with two staff members on hand at all times.

Do you have any indoor space? We do not have any indoor space at our preschool locations. While other Forest Preschool programs may spend up to half of their days indoors, we are outside 100% of the time.

How do you build academic skills without a classroom? The same way kids have for generations, by playing. We build literacy skills through storytelling and reading books that align with our subject matter. A library is a permanent fixture in our open-air school house. Math skills are built every day, from counting gallons of maple syrup to figuring what size sticks we need for our shelter.

How does weather affect the school? Rain is good, thunder is not! We know kids are tough and adaptable, and we have a thorough packing list that we recommend to every registered family. Therefore we only cancel classes in the event of hazardous weather conditions: active snowstorms, thunderstorms, or lightning; winds above 20 mph; temperatures below 20° F. We alert families of cancellation via email and text message, and offer virtual story times on those days. Because our staff conducts and prepares these story times, we give a 50% credit for cancelled weather days which we apply to the next month's balance.

Does the Rewilding School provide transportation? No. An authorized adult must always drop off and pick up your child.

What kind of regular communications can parents expect? At the end of every month we send out a parent newsletter with key information for the next month, and an account of activities from the last month, including some of our favorite plant and animal interactions and adventures, and photos of the kids having fun together.

Are there opportunities for parent involvement? Twice a year we offer Parent Stewardship Days as a chance for families to get together and give back to our wonderful outdoor sites. The Rewilding School also offers seasonal special events that preschoolers and their families are welcome to attend.

How will Forest Preschool prepare my child for kindergarten? Our Forest Preschool program focuses on developing healthy emotional and social toolkits, and we've found that our program better enables kids to join larger groups or indoor classroom settings later on. Kids graduate from Forest Preschool with an innate self-awareness and self-confidence, and with great communication and teamwork skills.

What if I need to withdraw my child? We understand changes happen in folks' lives. If a student needs to withdraw early, please let us know via email and we will suspend future payments. No refunds are issued for tuition payments already made.

Do you offer scholarships? While The Rewilding School is working hard on establishing scholarship opportunities, we do not have any at this time.

If my child requires additional assistance, can an aide come along? Absolutely! Any child with an aide at preschool can bring a non-family aide to Forest Preschool.

The Rewilding Forest Preschool is not an accredited preschool, and is not licensed as a New York State Childcare Provider. We are not legally affiliated with any school.



Tuition

We offer three options for registration in our Forest Preschool: two days (Tuesdays & Thursdays), three days (Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays), or five days a week (Monday-Friday).

Tuition Schedule

5 days - Monday through Friday
\$7800 (\$780/month, \$39/day)

3 days- Monday, Wednesday & Friday
\$5040 (\$504/month, \$42/day)

2 days - Tuesday & Thursday
\$3360 (\$336/month, \$42/day)

Payments are charged directly to your credit card each month around the 20th. Payments are charged two months ahead. This means that a payment in September will cover the tuition for the month of November. This schedule allows us to pay our teachers for training and set up our classrooms each year. It also means that your last payment is in April for the school year and you are not charged in May and June. Anyone joining after the enrollment deadline will be on a modified 2 month ahead payment schedule.

Registration

To reserve a spot, please email us at info@rewildingschool.com with your preferred location, the age of your child, and whether they are potty trained. Our team will help guide you through the process to make sure our program is a great fit for your family. After registration is complete, we will email the packing list, 2023-24 school calendar, and arrange for an onboarding meeting with your child's teacher so we can learn how to best support your child in our program.

Site Visits

We encourage prospective students and their families to visit our open-air classroom during the school year by attending one of our monthly Open House events from February through June. Site visits and appointments with the Program Director are also possible, if desired. Please email us at info@rewildingschool.com for details.

